THE POWER OF REMEMBRANCE

POLITICAL PARTIES, MEMORY AND LEARNING ABOUT THE PAST IN LEBANON



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Political Parties, Memory and Learning about the Past in Lebanon

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FOREWORD

At a time when the Middle East is suffering from civil strife, violent extremist groups, and foreign military intervention, one wonders how historians will describe this dark period in coming years and how future generations will learn about and relate to their past. Mara Albrecht and Bassel Akar's study gives us a glimpse into what this intergenerational memory transmission could look like if the lessons from Lebanon's painful past are not heeded. Their article is a courageous analysis of how the memory of war in Lebanon has and is being recorded in the Lebanese context and the central role political parties are playing in that process.

Forty-one years have passed since the beginning of the Lebanese 1975-1990 war, yet this research remains as pertinent as it has ever been. Albrecht and Akar's analysis looks at how political parties are shaping the historical narratives to educate the next generation of party supporters and the Lebanese public at large. Such processes are defining Lebanon's collective memory and will likely define inter-communal relations for decades to come.

Using data collected from a variety of sources, the qualitative research conducted draws upon visuals, written materials, interviews and other communication tools and techniques from seven leading political parties covering the Lebanese political spectrum. Albrecht and Akar try to understand how political parties' narratives relate to one other and how they describe the 'other'. What transpires is a divided landscape, where political parties are fighting to assert their interpretation of the facts and where shared narratives are almost nonexistent or impossible. In the authors' search to find a grand narrative that could give the youth of Lebanon a better understanding of the tragic events of the war and past history, they conclude that it is more practical and objective to focus on each party's narrative and to juxtapose these narratives in ways that encourage the student to reflect, critic and understand various perspectives of the past in order to make up their own mind.

The article depicts how political parties construct their image and more importantly their message. Among other things, they find that leaders are depicted as iconic symbolic figures, martyrs are glorified, and parties compete on who sacrificed the most and who has contributed the most to the survival of Lebanon. Through such techniques and others described in the article, the authors explain how war nostalgia is being cultivated even though party leaders claim they do not want it to return.

Suffering and sacrifice as well as triumph and heroism are key ingredients of the political memory formation. Using memory as a 'symbolic weapon', it is used selectively and at will to connect the past with the present and the future.

Finally, the article offers several lessons learned regarding 'communicative memory' and 'cultural memory'. Such lessons are relevant to the countries of the region in which numerous minorities are each trying to assert their identity, creating a rich and beautiful mosaic. Following the Arab Spring, newly created political parties will sooner or later be engaged in attempts at dominating the public discourse and shaping national memory. The lessons learned from this article will certainly help political party representatives reflect on their role in nation building, but should also help those in the region better appreciate the importance of transforming their 'memory of violence' and their narratives of war and arrested development into a memory of peace, humanity, nation building, development and progress.

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***forum*ZFD** (Forum Civil Peace Service) is a German non-governmental organization established in 1996. It strives for a culture of non-violence, where conflicts will be dealt constructively with the goal of ensuring peace. With the help of qualified peace experts and the implementation of projects of the Civil Peace Service, *forumZFD* works on the development of non-violent conflict transformation methods and tools for dealing with violent conflicts. *forumZFD* implements programs in the Middle East, Western Balkans, Philippines, Germany and most recently in Cambodia.

*forum*ZFD has been working in Lebanon since 2009. The peace experts in collaboration with local NGOs develop projects in three areas: *dealing with the past*, *capacity development* and *community mobilising*. Through *dealing with the past* – not only the Civil War, but also more recent events – initiatives aim to promote mutual acceptance of different narratives of the past. Also, supporting individuals to engage in an inclusive discourse on history and identity is stressed. By *capacity development* we offer trainings in non-violent conflict transformation to further develop the capacity of the local civil society and our partner organizations to address conflict in a constructive and peaceful way. As part of the *community mobilising* project, *forum*ZFD together with its partners train Lebanese and Syrian community activists to strengthen intergroup relationships, address local conflicts and meet local needs of both communities in areas where there is a high influx of Syrian refugees.

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ACRONYMS

CPA	Cadre Political Academy
FM	Future Movement
FPM	Free Patriotic Movement
LF	Lebanese Forces
PSP	Progressive Socialist Party
SIPTI	Students Intellectual and Political Training Institute
SSNP	Syrian Social Nationalist Party
WANA	West Asia and North Africa

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents the results of an interdisciplinary research project conducted by Mara Albrecht (University of Erfurt, Germany) and Bassel Akar (Notre Dame University – Louaize, Lebanon) in collaboration with *forum*ZFD in Lebanon in 2015. Based on a theoretical framework of collective political memory and different approaches of learning about the past in history education, the study investigates the use of memory by various political parties in Lebanon in the political and educational domains. The political parties included in the study are the Free Patriotic Movement, the Future Movement, Hezbollah, the Lebanese Kataeb Party, the Lebanese Forces, the Progressive Socialist Party and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party. The researchers selected the parties based on their political relevance in past and present Lebanon, their diverse ideological outlooks, and the different confessional communities and social milieus from which they recruit their members.

Lebanese political parties foster different narratives of the past, which consist of opposing and contradicting interpretations of historical events, especially with regard to the violent episodes of the recent past (e.g. 'Civil War', 'Independence Intifada', conflict with Israel, and political assassinations). The political parties undertake huge efforts to create and perpetuate their own distinctive cultures of remembrance, often through exercising influence in many spheres including education. As there is no dominant national narrative in Lebanon, the conflicting interpretations of the past reinforce antagonisms between different groups of society. All attempts to reform the national history curriculum have failed since 1970 mostly because of their different perspectives on the past. The process of agreeing on a single, national narrative poses a threat to further conflict and can potentially lead to alienation of partisans from political parties.

The research study examines the specific cultures of remembrance of each of the parties and identifies common themes and narratives (e.g. glorification of martyrs, adherence to different resistance narratives). Furthermore, it aims at categorizing the symbolic forms and political rituals used by the various political parties to remember the past, and explains the purposes of their cultures of remembrance. It also illustrates their roles, visions and approaches in formal and non-formal education. The evidence was drawn from interviews with political party officials, participant observation at commemorative festivities, observations at 'lieux de mémoire' in Lebanon, and analysis of primary sources (party newspapers, etc.).

In this study, we argue that having multiple [hi]stories while at the same time critically examining these historical accounts could be a more reasonable and realistic approach

to dealing with a violent past that avoids further conflict and encourages dialogue among political groups. This argument is based on the political and cultural diversity of the Lebanese society, which is regarded as a cultural strength. Examining multiple narratives requires a ‘disciplinary approach’ to learning about the past that requires learners to construct conclusions by critically inquiring into various sources of evidence and interpretations of historical events. Political parties in Lebanon could use their influence in the educational domain to adopt this approach not only in their own formal and non-formal education initiatives but also in public schools. In the political domain, the mutual respect for different narratives of the past by all political groups could lessen political tensions. Further research and dialogues can explore new forms of collective memory that are not exclusive and transpire from a shared science of examining different interpretations of the past.

1 INTRODUCTION

On March 10, 2012, several people were injured in clashes between protesters and security forces in Beirut during a rally organized by the Kataeb Party's and the National Liberal Party's student sections. The young demonstrators, carrying flags of their political parties, rallied against the proposal of a new history curriculum, which in their opinion was biased.[1] One of the main reasons of protest was that the 'Islamic Resistance' against Israel was to be mentioned in the history textbooks, while the 'Lebanese Resistance' against the Palestinians and Syrians was to be excluded. Consequently, another attempt to revise the history curriculum failed, leaving the pre-war curriculum of 1971 in place, which only covers the history of Lebanon until its independence in 1943. The numerous political parties in Lebanon are still in gridlock over the implementation of a new national history curriculum.

The above-mentioned event illustrates several tensions related to political culture, political memory and history education in Lebanon. For example, one of these tensions arises from conflicting interpretations of historical accounts including the more recent history of the 'Civil War' (1975-1990),[2] the period of Syrian hegemony during the post-war period as well as the 'Independence Intifada' in 2005. There is no single (or national) narrative that all societal groups even remotely agree on. Indeed, political parties make great efforts to foster particular narratives of the past in their cultures of remembrance that often reveal contrasting and conflicting interpretations of historical events. Moreover, the influence of political parties in education in Lebanon sometimes contributes to arising tensions in the conflicting interpretation of the past, which shows that the political and educational sphere in Lebanon are highly interconnected. Finally the challenge remains to map out an urgently needed new history curriculum that includes Lebanon's contemporary history and does not act as a tripwire to violence and conflict.

The significance of collective memory in Lebanon's political culture is striking. Larger than life-sized political posters memorialize assassinated political leaders. Commemoration festivities are held in honor of the political parties' martyrs. Memorial sites are important landmarks and serve as political ritual sites. Political songs celebrate heroes and victories. Museums constructed by the political parties depict the

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1 Cf. Martin Armstrong, "9 injured in Beirut rally clashes between Kataeb, authorities," *The Daily Star Lebanon*, Beirut, 10.03.2012, accessed June 14, 2014, http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2012/Mar-10/166192-kataeb-supporters-clash-with-army-during-beirut-march.ashx.

2 The war period in Lebanon between 1975 and 1990 is commonly referred to as 'Civil War', although there has been a number of different internal and external wars and armed conflicts during that time with the active participation of external state-, non-state-, and even multi-national actors. Therefore the term civil war is a reduction in complexity.

history of Lebanon from the point of view of the particular political group. Having said this, it becomes obvious that the memory of violence and war is an important aspect of the commemorative culture in Lebanon. However, the process of publicly remembering violence and war through apparent contrasting narratives can be perceived as a cause for future violence. Of course the use of memory for political purposes is a global phenomenon. Nevertheless, the large number of political parties in Lebanon and the high contestation for political power and resources have resulted in the creation of an overabundance of different cultures of remembrance. The aim of these different cultures of remembrance is not only to maintain a political memory for each respective group, but also to showcase this memory to the public and their political opponents. Thus, the efforts and resources spent for different commemorative activities and media of remembrance can be regarded as an investment in obtaining the prerogative of the interpretation of the past, which includes the public propagation of the individual party's own perspective on the past and, at the same time, the delegitimization of opposing narratives.

In political culture, usually the nation-state or a dominant political actor creates and assumes the social-cultural responsibility to create the public culture of remembrance.[3] The collective political memory is the basis for the formation of a national consciousness and/or for the legitimation of political order. The public (national) culture of remembrance is also the result of public discourse on which historical periods, events, accounts and persons are of relevance for a sense of national identity. Of course not all groups of society have the same influence on the decision of which interpretation of the past becomes the prevalent one. Moreover, different political actors almost always present conflicting interpretations of the past in their political rivalries. However, in most nation-states a single narrative is dominant while alternative narratives of non-dominant actors are suppressed. In a country like Lebanon, with numerous political groups and none of them constituting the majority, developing an approach to interpret a contested past through public discourse is very difficult and has the potential to lead to further conflict.[4] Moreover, the rhetoric from political parties to start dialogues on interpretations of the past with political opponents have, by and large, failed or been far from realized.

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3 Cf. Helmut König, „Das Politische des Gedächtnisses" [The Political Memory], in *Gedächtnis und Erinnerung. Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch*, ed. Christian Gudehus, Ariane Eichenberg, and Harald Welzer (Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 2010), 115-125.

4 A good example in this regard is the political utilization of the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. Cf. Muhamad Mugraby, "The Syndrome of One-Time Exceptions and the Drive to Establish the Proposed Hariri Court," in *The Politics of Violence, Truth and Reconciliation in the Arab Middle East*, ed. Sune Haugbolle and Anders Hastrup (London/New York: Routledge, 2009), 21-43.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the use of memory by political parties in Lebanon in the political and educational domains, in an attempt to draw conclusions on the validity and feasibility of an inter/intra party dialogue on interpreting violent and contested historical events. In the political domain, we examine the significance of collective memory to political parties and how they make use of their own interpretations of the past for their political agendas. We study the approaches of political parties in remembering sensitive historical accounts, like war, within a conceptual framework of collective, cultural, and political memory. In the educational domain, we explore educational principles, frameworks and approaches applied by political parties for remembering the past. Across the two domains, we also examine by which means and for what reasons the different political parties use memory.

1.2 Methodology

It is scarcely manageable to examine all Lebanese political parties' cultures of remembrance and all their education-related activities, so we selected seven political parties for this study: Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), Future Movement (FM), Hezbollah, Kataeb Party, Lebanese Forces (LF), Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), and Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP). The selection is based on a number of factors, including variance of age, authority through government representation, participation in one of the two main political camps (March 8 and March 14), political orientation as well as adherence to different political ideologies and confessional representation. The study is based on a collection of different sources, including qualitative, semi-structured interviews with party representatives, participant observation at commemorative festivities, studies of memorial sites, and selected audio-visual and written material from political parties related to history and memory.

The limited number of political parties and the use of qualitative research methods present some limitations of the study. The views of official party representatives do not necessarily represent the different opinions of the partisans within a political party. Some of the opinions expressed by the interviewees have to be considered as their personal point of view and do not necessarily agree completely with the official party line. Hence, this study can only be regarded as a partial, non-representative view on the topic. Through our choice of seven quite diverse parties we assume that we can cover a wide range of different viewpoints. Furthermore, the interviews are accompanied by additional primary sources and participant observation of party activities, which allows a more multifaceted view on the topic than an approach which would only be based on interviews.

Our methodical approach in this study begins with the development of a theoretical framework based on a critical review of literature on collective, cultural and political

memory as well as approaches to and purposes of history education for memory. The review extrapolates specific references to the memory of violence and war and evaluates approaches to memory and history education by finding intended and unintended consequences of the political party approaches of remembering the past. Based on this theoretical framework, we discuss our findings from the evaluation and interpretation of the sources.

Our findings suggest that memories of violence and war are of great significance to each political party's culture of remembrance. Moreover, the competing interpretations and priorities of historical accounts indicate that reconciling the different historical narratives into one, unified story is near to an impossible feat and could sustain and fuel conflicts. At the same time, however, evidence from this study shows that political parties' approaches to learning about the past include values for evidence, dialogue and critical inquiry. These findings suggest that the approach to dealing with conflicting interpretations of the past could feasibly shift from constructing a single or grand narrative to focusing on how we inquire about the past, gather evidence and make historical claims supported by evidence. In conclusion, rather than finding a single, national narrative that all political parties agree on, we argue that critically examining different [hi]stories could be a more reasonable and realistic approach to dealing with a violent past, to avoid further conflict and facilitate dialogue between political actors.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is built on a theoretical framework that we introduce in three parts. In the first part, we present the concepts of collective, cultural and political memory. These notions are derived from the works of Maurice Halbwachs as well as Jan and Aleida Assmann. We also introduce Pierre Nora's concept of 'lieux de mémoire' and follow Wulf Kansteiner's call to include the relevant historical factors and the aspect of reception of the "memory consumers" when examining political memory in Lebanon. In the second part we present significant works on memory and violence for the West Asia and North Africa (WANA)[5] region. Finally, we introduce concepts of formal history education, especially the distinction between the 'grand narrative' and 'disciplinary' approaches to learning about the past. These two approaches are of particular importance when examining how and why political parties in Lebanon remember the past.

2.1 Collective, cultural and political memory

Although there is no binding definition of "collective memory", all studies concerning this concept deal with memories shared by or within a group. French sociologist, Maurice Halbwachs, highlighted the social dimension of the processes of memory in his fundamental works on collective memory.[6] There, he postulated that collective memory is shaped by social frameworks ('cadres sociaux'), which are created by communicative acts within social groups such as families, religious communities, occupational groups or social classes. Specific milieus of remembrance are created, in which not only the composition and orientation of a social group is of importance for a memory shaping process, but also the position any individual might have within that group. This leads to the creation of particular images of the past, which are highly influenced by the present. Hence, and in accordance with the contemporary notion of history in his time, Halbwachs strictly differentiates between history and memory. According to Halbwachs, there are many different collective memories but only one history, which is reconstructed and authenticated by historians. It only covers the past to the point where the living memory starts.[7]

Drawing on Halbwachs' notion of collective memory and the difference between history and memory, French historian, Pierre Nora, focused his work on the public,

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5 Typically, the region has been referred to as the "Middle East", "Middle East and North Africa" and "Arab region". We find "West Asia and North Africa" as a neutral geographical term to be free of any political undertones.

6 Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* [The social frames of the memory] (Paris: Michel, 1994 (1925)); Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective* [The collective memory] (Paris: Michel, 1997 (1950)).

7 Halbwachs' strict distinction of history and memory has to be regarded against the backdrop of 19th century historicism. This concept of history, which ignores the memorial function of historiography, has long been outdated. Especially since the 1970s historians increasingly factored in the subjectivity, perspectivity and constructed nature of all history writing. Cf. Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 25.

national dimension of memory. He developed the concept of "sites of memory" ('lieux de mémoire') that has to be understood as 'loci' (Latin for 'places') in the widest sense of the word. 'Lieux de mémoire' encompass not only physical places like buildings and monuments but also hymns, songs, texts, pictures, flags, historical personalities, festivities, idioms and all kinds of symbolic forms in which a national consciousness crystallizes and which all are expressions of a national culture. Nora postulates that collective memory in its original form has ceased to exist. It has been drawn back into these 'lieux de mémoire' as artificial embodiments of memory. In Nora's famous words: "There are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory."[8] Only single fragments of memory are stored in 'lieux de mémoire' and they get combined selectively for each individual purpose. This of course opens up possibilities to use any fragment of memory for specific, politically motivated aims. Often, in a national context, a specific view of the past is promoted by a state or party trying to eliminate or thrust aside competing narratives.

The German Egyptologists and literature and cultural scientists, Jan and Aleida Assmann, also focus on public cultures of remembrance and the shared repertoire of memories of the past of large in-groups like nations or religious communities. They drew on Halbwachs' work on collective memory to develop a sophisticated, theoretical framework for different forms of memory. Most importantly, they distinguished between "communicative memory" and "cultural memory".[9] The former encompasses the informal processes of memory formation in the sphere of the everyday life, as described by Halbwachs. It includes memories of the recent past and shifts through time from generation to generation.[10] The latter refers to intentional, often highly organized and even institutionalized forms of passing on memory within groups. Moreover, cultural memory encompasses all that knowledge of a society, which is intentionally transmitted from generation to generation, stored in externalized media of remembrance ('Erinnerungsmedien') and becomes the 'lieux de mémoire' of Pierre Nora. These media of remembrance encompass different commemorative rituals and iconographies, and channel different aspects into one stable and organized shared memory. In contrast to communicative memory, which is closely linked to everyday

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8 Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (1989): 7-24, here 7.

9 Assmann's pioneering work in this field was: Jan Assmann, "Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität" [Collective Memory and Cultural Identity], in *Kultur and Gedächtnis*, ed. Jan Assmann and Tonio Hoelscher (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), 9-19 (English translation: Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 125-133).

10 Cf. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* [Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and political Imagination], 2nd rev. ed. (München: Beck, 1997), 50f.

life, cultural memory is more abstract and based on formalized rituals, architecture, material culture and iconographies. It provides nations or sub-national in-groups with a collective identity. Halbwachs and Jan and Aleida Assmann emphasize that the memory of the past is formed by the present and becomes instrumentalized for the necessities of the present. Consequently, cultural memory transforms the events of the past into symbolic figures of memory as well as history into myths and narratives.[11]

Another kind of memory that is of particular importance for political communities is the "political memory" and its specific form of national memory.[12] Political memory is a collective memory in the narrow sense of the word and together with strong ties of allegiance is able to create durable and unified collective identities for in-groups such as political parties. As cultural memory, it is artificially created and intentionally passed on by symbolic forms and practices. It is meant to last for long periods of time and is very often incorporated in institutions. Political memory is also founded on externalized media of remembrance like memorials and monuments, jubilees and other festivities, iconographies and rituals. While cultural memory incorporates all cultural knowledge of a society, political memory is situated within the political sphere. It encompasses all knowledge that is of relevance for a political group. This knowledge is instrumentalized by a political group in the process of the formation of a collective (political) identity. Through the organized and institutionalized assessment of the past, which is very much geared towards the present and the future, the current political position of the in-group is legitimized and its collective identity confirmed. Therefore, specific cultures of remembrance are intentionally created.[13]

A public national culture of remembrance by no means encompasses the complete collective memory of a nation. There are always conflicting sub-national communities of shared memory within a nation. This is especially true for Lebanon, where a plethora of different confessional and political groups maintain their specific collective identity and their own culture of remembrance. This not only makes Lebanon a state contested in its national identity, but also maintains dispute about Lebanese history. Particular groups narrate different and even conflicting accounts of the past; this includes references to antique times (Phoenician heritage), the perspective on Arab and Ottoman history, the French mandate and especially the perception of the more

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[11] Cf. Ibid., 52.

[12] Aleida Assmann is building her concept of 'political memory' on Ernest Renan and his thoughts on the cohesion of national communities. Cf. Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik* [The long shadow of the past. Culture of remembrance and politics of history] (München: Beck, 2006), 36-40.

[13] Cf. König, „Das Politische des Gedächtnisses" [The Political Memory], 115-125.

recent history of the Civil War and the 'Independence Intifada'. For the remembrance of the recent past, both cultural as well as communicative memory play a significant role.

With regard to political cultures of remembrance, it is also very interesting to have a closer look at the interconnection between public and private forms of memory. To a great extent, the public forms shape the private forms of memory. Nevertheless, there are significant differences between what should be remembered officially (public) and what is actually remembered individually (private). German historian Wulf Kansteiner explicitly urges to include the whole dimension of reception on part of the "memory consumers" and hence emphasizes the importance of integrating all historical factors in collective memory studies. These factors include "the intellectual and cultural traditions that frame our representations of the past, the memory makers who selectively adopt and manipulate these traditions, and the memory consumers who use, ignore, or transform such artifacts according to their own interests".[14]

In the case of Lebanon, for example, some political parties try to create a new, modern image of themselves and tend to officially evaluate their participation in the Civil War as something related to the past. Still, the war is an important part of the private culture of remembrance for many of the partisans who remember their own participation in the party's militia organization: the glorious victories, traumatic defeats and remembering the martyrs. This discrepancy becomes very apparent when comparing private forms of remembering (e.g. self-designed memorial videos of partisans) with the official culture of remembrance of political parties that is geared to a wider audience. Therefore, through reluctance at the individual level to give up these memories, the parties, at a collective level, are also under pressure or obligation to stage public commemorations to remember their war-related history. This is notwithstanding the fact that political groups are profiting on many levels from remembering past times of cohesiveness and strength, venerating martyrs and celebrating the anniversary of a decisive victory. Most importantly, the remembrance of the war particularly fosters the development of a strong collective political identity within the political party. These aspects will be further explored in the discussion section of this article.

2.2 Studies on memory and violence in West Asia and North Africa

For the longest time, most empirically comparative works on memory tended to exclude case studies from WANA. Over the past 10-15 years, however, there has been a significant increase in studies that focus on memory and memory politics of states

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[14] Wulf Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies," *History and Theory* 41 (2002): 179-197, here 180.

from that region.[15] Some important works in this field include, Eric Davis' "Memories of State - Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq", Laleh Kahlili's "Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine - The Politics of National Commemoration" and Ted Swedenburg's "Memories of Revolt: The 1936-1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past".[16] The works of Sune Haugbolle[17] and Lucia Volk[18] investigate political memory and violence in Lebanon.

Haugbolle and Hastrup highlight the proliferation of memory politics in the Arab world. They emphasize that the use of memory for political purposes is not a new phenomenon. What is novel, though, is an increasingly strong focus on memory of violence, instead of cultural and historical memory. According to Haugbolle and Hastrup, this shift of focus has been intensified by war and armed conflicts, as well as periods of political oppression in the region during the past decades. This led to a political contestation over memory by numerous local and international actors who all have their own perspectives on these violent events of the past and their own incentives to use memory for their political purposes.[19] Silverstein and Makdisi, too, underline the close link between memory and violence in the WANA political culture. They argue that "memories of violence and violence of memory" influence contemporary politics of conflict and reconciliation to a large degree and that "past violence is constantly rewritten in the terms of the present conflict".[20] The remembrance of past violence, whether regarded as trauma or destiny, "becomes the basis for the constitution of collective narratives of origin, loss, and recovery".[21] These collective narratives are not consistent and perpetuated in the same form from one

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[15] Cf. Sune Haugbolle, Anders Hastrup, "Introduction: Outlines of a New Politics of Memory in the Middle East," in *The Politics of Violence, Truth and Reconciliation in the Arab Middle East*, ed. Sune Haugbolle and Anders Hastrup (London/New York: Routledge, 2009), vii-xxiii, here viii and notes 1 and 2.

[16] Eric Davis, *Memories of State - Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Laleh Kahlili, *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine - The Politics of National Commemoration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936-1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

[17] Sune Haugbolle, *War and Memory in Lebanon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Haugbolle, "Counterpublics of Memory: Memoirs and Public Testimonies of the Lebanese Civil War," in *Publics, Politics and Participation: Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa, ed.* Seteney Khalid Shami (New York: Social Science Research Council, 2009), 119-150; Haugbolle, "Public and Private Memory of the Lebanese Civil War," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 25 (2005): 191-203.

[18] Lucia Volk, *Memorials & Martyrs in Modern Lebanon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010); Volk, "When Memory Repeats Itself: The Politics of Heritage in Post Civil War Lebanon," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40 (2008): 291-314.

[19] Cf. Haugbolle/Hastrup, "Introduction", vii and ix.

[20] Paul A. Silverstein, Ussama Makdisi, "Introduction: Memory and Violence in the Middle East and North Africa," in *Memory and Violence in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Paul A. Silverstein and Ussama Makdisi (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 1-24, here 7.

[21] Ibid., 1.

generation to the next, but are constantly revised and modified in a process that includes the changes and developments required by each successive generation. These collective narratives become flexible to adopt and usurp particular events as well as suppress and replace others.[22]

National memories of violence are persistently contested by subaltern narratives of violence. According to Silverstein and Makdisi, local commemorative practices compete with official narratives and "transform 'victims' into 'martyrs,' 'terrorists' into 'heroes,' and 'soldiers' into 'assassins' (and vice versa) through a variety of rituals and iconographies of remembrance".[23] Of particular importance regarding this point are performative practices that reenact violence in public space. Through public staging of these performances, violence is remembered in close connection to places and spaces. They maintain that "territory, in this respect, comes to function as a repository of past violence, a landscape filled with anger, sorrow, and jubilation."[24]

These insights are especially important when considering the Lebanese case. Its contemporary history is dominated by wars and violent conflicts while its numerous political actors promote and perpetuate different narratives of violence. Keynote presentations and series of workshops at the conference "Healing the Wounds of History" in 2011, showed that the Lebanese population and institutions continue to struggle in processing a history of armed conflict and violence. Indeed, the diverse perspectives on the Civil War and other violent events of its recent past (e.g. assassinations of prominent politicians in 2005/06, the war during the summer of 2006, and the violent clashes in May 2008) seem irreconcilable. Nevertheless, national dialogue sessions chaired by the President of the Republic of Lebanon in 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014 and 2015 and the establishment of a National Dialogue Committee in 2010 are testimony that the different political groups all agree on the necessity of reappraising past and present issues together.[25] However, the usually aspired objective when dealing with historical accounts and events is to adjust the divergent views towards a single (national) narrative.

2.3 History education and learning about the past

Whether through political movements or formal institutions, remembering the past involves design of activities or curricula and approaches to learning or remembering. Hence, in this study, we find that the disciplinary field of education is critical in examining what key historical events and accounts political parties find important and how they choose to remember them. The two main frameworks in education that allow

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[22] Ibid., 11.
[23] Ibid., 6.
[24] Ibid., 9.
[25] Cf. The News Archive of the Presidency of the Republic of Lebanon, accessed February 16, 2016, http://www.presidency.gov.lb/English/News/Pages/NationalDialogue.aspx.

for a more interdisciplinary analysis of the findings are: (1) purposes or aims of learning history and (2) approaches to learning about the past.

The aims of formal history education vary according to each country's government priorities, despite a common vision of learning about the past for improving the quality of living in the present and future. Dominant approaches taken by governments to develop national curricula for history education aim to promote a unifying national identity and, in contexts affected by armed conflict, foster social reconstruction and reconciliation. These approaches emphasize the importance of a single or grand narrative, an official interpretation of historical events. Such grand narratives capitalize on victories, creating a collective 'we' against 'they' as found in cases like North and South Korea[26] and Pakistan and India[27]. Another objective of teaching official histories is to promote reconciliation and ameliorate past harm.[28] History education through a common narrative assumes that stability and peace is fostered through the elimination and selection of past armed conflicts and violence. Selecting historical accounts means that others are dismissed or forgotten.[29] As in the case of Cambodia, forgetting about past conflicts could be one method of maintaining corrupt forces in government or power.[30] Furthermore, consequential pedagogies to such official narratives include lectured bodies of information leaving no opportunities for challenging existing official narratives and thus, reviving certain cultural elements regarded as roots of conflict, as in the case of Rwanda.[31]

Examinations of approaches to learning and teaching history are typically informed by a classical framework that dichotomizes the primary aim of history education into substance (e.g. learning a grand or official narrative) and discipline (e.g. learning how

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[26] Roland Bleiker, Huang Young-Ju, "On the Use and Abuse of Korea's Past: An Inquiry into History Teaching and Reconciliation," in *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation*, ed. Elizabeth A. Cole (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 249-274.

[27] John Dorschner, Thomas Sherlock, "The Role of History Textbooks in Shaping Collective Identities in India and Pakistan," in *Teaching the Violent Past*, ed. Elizabeth A. Cole, 275-315.

[28] Elizabeth A. Cole, "Introduction: Reconciliation and history education," in *Teaching the violent past*, ed. Elizabeth A. Cole, 1-28; Laurel E. Fletcher, Harvey Weinstein, "Violence and Social Repair: Rethinking the Contribution of Justice to Reconciliation," *Human Rights Quarterly* 24 (2002): 573-639; Michalinos Zembylas, et al., "Teachers' Understanding of Reconciliation and Inclusion in Mixed Schools of Four Troubled Societies" *Research in Comparative and International Education* 4 (2009): 406-422.

[29] Richard J. Paxton, "A Deafening Silence: History Textbooks and the Students Who Read Them," *Review of Educational Research* 69(1999): 315-339; Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi Bhabha (New York: Routledge, 1990), 8-22.

[30] David Chandler, "Cambodia Deals with its Past: Collective Memory, Demonisation and Induced Amnesia," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9 (2008): 355-369; Rachel Hughes, "Memory and Sovereignty in post 1979 Cambodia: Choeung Ek and Local Genocide Memorials," in *Genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda: New perspectives*, ed. Susan E. Cook (New Jersey: Transaction Books, 2006), 269-292.

[31] Sarah Freedman, et al., "Teaching History after Identity□Based Conflicts: The Rwanda Experience," *Comparative Education Review* 52 (2008): 663-690.

to construct evidence-informed claims about the past). The learning of substance and a disciplinary approach to learning and teaching history are not mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, the two approaches - grand narrative and disciplinary - compete with one another at pedagogical and political levels. For example, the grand narrative approach emphasizes a single story or official interpretation of past events, while a disciplinary approach requires learners to engage with historical concepts or higher-level thinking to argue for the most valid story.[32] Seixas (2000) illustrates these two approaches by comparing their pedagogical implications, strengths, limitations and political underpinnings. For instance, the grand narrative approach provides a theoretical framework for social cohesion, but the sole focus on substance resembles an authoritarian political nature that results in there being difficulties officiating the 'best version', books appearing as dogmatic and students memorizing textbook material. The disciplinary approach, on the other hand, emerges as a threat to collective memory, because it requires students to construct history and critically review different accounts or interpretations of the same event, and yet resembles the political nature of a liberal democracy. Seixas[33] also maintains that the grand narrative that directly aims at establishing a sense of commonality counters any learning of history as a discipline, which requires higher-level thinking like using evidence to justify causes and processes of change. Approaches to learning about the past conflict between a government agenda of social cohesion on the one hand and learning-centered aims of education (e.g. critical thinking, interpretation) for examining history on the other.

The Lebanese government has long-adopted the grand narrative approach to designing its history education curricula. Consequently, learning history through formal education in Lebanon remains within the traditions of rote learning.[34] Moreover, approaches to construct a single official story have left the Lebanese government in gridlock over approving revised history curricula (e.g. in 2000 and 2012) and, consequently the 1971 Arab-centered history curriculum remains in effect. Thereby, critical events in world history like landing on the moon and sensitive national events like the Civil War and the post-war period, and the 2005 'Independence Intifada' (also dubbed as 'Cedar Revolution'), are excluded from school education.

Nevertheless, history education remains one of the many approaches valued as key to social cohesion. Many civil society organizations (CSOs) have committed to engage

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32 Keith Jenkins, *Rethinking history* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

33 Peter Seixas, "Schweigen! Die Kinder! or, Does Postmodern History Have a Place in the Schools?," in *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives*, ed. Peter Stearns, Peter Seixas, and Sam Wineburg (New York: New York University Press, 2000): 19-37.

34 Kamal Abouchedid, Ramzi Nasser, and Jeremy Van Blommestein, "The Limitations of Inter-group Learning in Confessional School Systems: The Case of Lebanon," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 24 (2002): 61-82.

students in critically examining conflicting accounts and sensitive matters when learning history. For example, the Lebanese Association for History, has organized and managed ground-level capacity building projects, supporting history teachers across Lebanon to foster disciplinary approaches to learning history in classrooms. While many CSOs work with the youth, teachers and schools, some organizations like *forum*ZFD believe it is critically important to work at the community level (including municipalities, public institutions and local leaders) and more specifically, with political parties. Through the research project presented in this report, we can learn from the conversations with political party representatives their key approaches and purposes in remembering historical accounts and events. Furthermore, findings could suggest a framework that provides a safe and common platform for learning about sensitive memories and histories.

3 CULTURES OF REMEMBRANCE OF LEBANESE POLITICAL PARTIES

Each of Lebanon's political parties has its own political memory, which is shaped by their different ideological world-views as well as by their diverse experiences of historical events and violent conflicts. The parties created and perpetuated particular cultures of remembrance that provide the party and its partisans with a distinctive collective identity. In this 4-part section, we illustrate how these cultures of remembrance are modeled in the case of each of the parties in our sample group, by which means the commemorative cultures are formed and maintained, and what purposes they fulfill for these political parties (FPM, FM, Hezbollah, Kataeb Party, LF, PSP, SSNP).

In the first part, we present a short overview of the historical founding contexts and ideological outlooks of the political parties and explain how these have shaped their cultures of remembrance. In the second part, we highlight the common themes and topics that emerged from the particular commemorative cultures of the parties and how their historical narratives differ. Following the argument of Wulf Kansteiner,[35] that "memory consumers" tend to have their own agenda when remembering the past, which is often quite different from the memory created by the "memory makers", we also point out some discrepancies between what should be remembered in accordance with the official party line and what is indeed remembered by the partisans. In particular – and with reference to Haugbolle and Hastrup and Silverstein and Makdisi – we discuss and evaluate the significance of memories of violence and how they could be of importance for the reenactment of contemporary conflict.

The third section comprises findings regarding the symbolic forms and cultural practices the parties employ to remember the past, corresponding to the 'media of remembrance' of Assmann & Assmann or the 'sites of memory' of Pierre Nora. These encompass, amongst others: memorial ceremonies and party jubilees, political rituals, public performances like memorial marches, political songs and iconographies (statues, posters etc.). In the fourth part, we discuss the purposes of the creation and perpetuation of specific cultures of remembrance by political parties in Lebanon, especially with regard to the formation of collective identities and the contestation for power through mass mobilization. Moreover, we discuss how memory is formed by and geared towards the present, whilst taking into account the perspectives of party officials. The final section draws on particular themes in education that emerged from the interviews, namely aims of history education and approaches to providing young people with non-formal educational experiences in research, interpersonal skills and

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[35] Cf. Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning", 180.

areas of political science. Our findings are then debated in a larger context concerning the struggle to find a single (national) narrative for recent Lebanese history and the alternative of having different, equally valid [hi]stories.

3.1 The significance of the political parties' founding contexts and ideological world-views

Political parties in Lebanon not only have divergent ideological outlooks, but were created during different phases of Lebanese history and therefore had quite different founding contexts. These three aspects have a profound impact on their perspectives on history and the particular cultures of remembrance they have created. In our sample, the oldest parties are the SSNP (founded in 1932) and the Kataeb Party (founded in 1936), which both were created during the French Mandate over Lebanon.[36] Together with an-Najjada Party, which was founded at approximately the same time, but today has been marginalized and exists without any real political power, they represented the three main forms of nationalism in Lebanon during that time. The Kataeb Party was and still is a strong advocate of Lebanese Nationalism (or 'Lebanonism'), which regards the Lebanese people as a nation distinct from their Arab neighbors.[37] The Najjada was a proponent of Arab Nationalism and therefore wanted to include Lebanon into a greater pan-Arab state. The SSNP propagates a Syrian Nationalism which was contrived by their founder, Antoun Saadeh, and aims at uniting the countries of the 'Syrian Fertile Crescent'[38] as one nation.[39] Although having these ideologically contrasting views towards Lebanon and the region, these parties opposed the French Mandate for their own ideological reasons. While the Kataeb Party started out as a paramilitary youth organization and was transformed into a political party in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the SSNP was founded as an underground political party, which operated secretly during its first years. The party founders, Pierre Gemayel and Antoun Saadeh, had been arrested several times and their political

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36 The only political party in Lebanon which is even older than the SSNP is the Lebanese Communist Party which was founded in 1924.

37 Cf. John P. Entelis, "Belief-System and Ideology Formation in the Lebanese Kata'ib Party," *International Journal for Middle East Studies* 4 (1973): 148-162, especially 154-158.

38 For the SSNP, the 'Syrian Fertile Crescent' "[…] has distinct natural boundaries and extends from the Taurus range in the northwest and the Zagros mountains in the northeast to the Suez canal and the Red Sea in the south and includes the Sinai peninsula and the gulf of Aqaba, and from the Syrian sea in the west, including the island of Cyprus, to the arch of the Arabian desert and the Persian gulf in the east." Accessed February 25,2016, see http://www.ssnp.com/new/ssnp/en/ssnp.htm.

39 Cf. Michael W. Suleiman, *Political Parties in Lebanon. The Challenge of a Fragmented Political Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), and the following monography, which includes many Arabic primary sources like the speeches of Antoun Saadeh: Labib Zuwiyya Yamak, *The Syrian Social Nationalist Party. An Ideological Analysis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

groups had been banned by the French authorities.[40] The resistance against oppression in their early years and the violent struggle against the French Mandate is an important topic of the commemorative culture of both parties still today. Moreover, both parties are proud of their long history and thus the remembrance of phases of struggle and resistance, former leaders as well as decisive turning points in the parties' histories makes their particular cultures of remembrance very diverse and sophisticated.

The next oldest party in our sample is the PSP, which was founded in 1949, well after the independence of Lebanon and during a period of peace. The PSP propagates an elaborated ideology called 'Progressive Socialism' which was developed by the party president and Druze political leader, Kamal Jumblatt, who hailed from a feudal background. The party ideology is influenced by Socialism, Western and Eastern Philosophy, religious mysticism as well as humanitarian ideals and is geared towards the freedom of the individual and the free developmental process of every human being.[41] Especially in its early years, the PSP had a high intellectual appeal and a quite multiconfessional membership base. Kamal Jumblatt was very active in forming alliances with other left-wing and socialist parties in a national, Arab, and international context, and rose to become a popular leader of the political left by the late 1960s. This formative phase of the PSP and especially the role of Jumblatt, is still of utmost importance in its culture of remembrance.

Two political parties in our sample were created as militia organizations during the Civil War: The LF (founded in 1976 as an umbrella organization for the Christian parties' militias, but since 1980, became a unified and independent organization) and Hezbollah (created during the early 1980s, officially founded in 1985). Their origins as militia organizations shape their cultures of remembrance to a large degree until today and manifest in a pronounced war nostalgia and martyr's cult. The LF can be regarded to some extent as a spin-off of the Kataeb Party, having evolved from the unification of the Christian militia organizations, of which Kataeb's militia was by far the largest.[42] Although there are pronounced differences between both parties - the LF, for example, regarding itself as a social-revolutionary movement - they are nevertheless ideologically close to each other. The LF also propagates Lebanese Nationalism.

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40 John P. Entelis, *Pluralism and Party Transformation in Lebanon: al-kata'ib 1936-1970* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 53; and SSNP Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

41 Le Parti Progressiste Socialiste (PSP): "Le Pacte du Parti Progressiste Socialiste, " in *Citoyen Libre et Peuple Heureux* (Beyrouth n.d. [1949?]), 9-32. For further information on Jumblatt's political thought see also Kamal Jumblatt, *Revolution in the World of Man* (Moukhtara: Dar al-Takadoumiya, 2007).

42 For a detailed description of the evolvement of the LF cf. Lewis W. Snider, "The Lebanese Forces: Their Origins and Role in Lebanon's Politics," in *Middle East Journal* 38 (1984): 1-33, here 5-10.

Hezbollah, however, is a more radical Islamic offshoot of the Amal Movement, a Shiite party that was founded by the charismatic Imam Musa as-Sadr in 1974. As-Sadr was the first to give the underprivileged Shiite community in Lebanon their own political voice and self-confidence.[43] The struggle of the Lebanese Shiites for political equality is part of Hezbollah's culture of remembrance and is still shaping its perception of society, having taken up the cause of upholding the "dignity of the deprived".[44] A constitutive element for the creation of Hezbollah was the struggle against the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon, the Islamic Resistance, which is still one of the main elements of its identity construction and therefore, a crucial part of their culture of remembrance.[45] This so called 'Culture of Resistance' is best exemplified by "Mleeta - The Landmark of Resistance", an open air museum build by the party in South Lebanon. Also important for Hezbollah's world-view was the ideological influence of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and its leader, Ayatollah Khomeini's, concept of Wilayat al-Faqih, the 'Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists', meaning that government and politics are supposed to be controlled by religious authorities.[46] Although religion is still the core of Hezbollah's ideology, the party has undergone many ideological shifts and has adapted their doctrine to the Lebanese context with its many confessional communities and its pluralistic society.[47] Hence, its commemorative culture is centered on religious motives on the one hand (e.g. Ashura, the martyrdom of Hussein, etc.) and heroic and violence-oriented motives on the other hand (e.g. veneration of martyrs, culture of resistance, remembrance of heroic battles, etc.).

The last two parties in our sample were created as political movements during the end of the Civil War or shortly afterwards, and were only recently transformed into political parties. The FPM was founded by General Michel Aoun in 1989. During that time, Aoun was Prime Minister[48] and fought against the Syrian army in Lebanon. When he had to go into exile on October 13

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[43] Cf. the Charter of Amal Movement, accessed September 15, 2015, http://www.afwajamal.com/english/?page_id=57.

[44] An important slogan of Hezbollah. Lecture "Hizballah's 2009 'Political Manifesto'." of Dr. Ibrahim Mousawi, Media Representative of Hezbollah, Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB), September 15, 2010

[45] For Hezbollah's 'Culture of Resistance' cf. Alastair Crooke, *Resistance. The Essence of the Islamist Revolution* (London/New York: Pluto Press, 2009), 174-189.

[46] Cf. Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah. Politics and Religion* (London/Sterling: Pluto Press, 2002), 59-68.

[47] Cf. Joseph Elie Alagha, *Hizbullah's Identity Construction* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 55. See also the newest party platform: "Hezbollah Manifesto (30 November 2009)," in *Hizbullah's Documents. From the 1985 Open Letter to the 2009 Manifesto*, ed. Joseph Elie Alagha (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 115-138 and for a discussion Alagha, *Hizbullah's Identity Construction*, 155-176. For a general overview of Hezbollah's ideological development until 2005 cf. Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology. Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006).

[48] According to the unwritten National Pact and the power sharing agreement in Lebanon, Prime Minister is a post which is usually held by a Sunni politician. But when Amine Gemayel's term as president ended and there was no agreement on his successor, he appointed Aoun, a Maronite and army commander-in-chief, as Prime Minister. Cf. Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon (*London/Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2007), 240.

1990, the FPM continued its political work as an underground political movement during the phase of the Syrian hegemony over Lebanon. This time of political oppression, when members of the FPM and other banned Christian parties were persecuted and jailed, left an imprint on the party's world-view and self-perception and is remembered as a time of resistance.[49] During the 'Independence Intifada' and after the withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon in 2005, Aoun returned from exile and the FPM was transformed into a political party that year in September. Formerly one of the main critics of the Syrian presence in Lebanon, the FPM now promotes good diplomatic relations between the Lebanese and the Syrian government. The party also found a new partner in Hezbollah after the FPM stopped participating in the March 14 alliance because of a dispute mainly with the FM regarding the number of seats in parliament allocated to the FPM.[50] The FPM, as a party, has a politically centrist to center-left position and an ideological outlook encompassing Secularism, Lebanese Nationalism, and Social-Liberalism.[51] Important for the commemorative culture of the FPM is the remembrance of Aoun's position as former commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces as well as the war against the Syrian troops in the formative phase of the FPM. This is expressed, for example, via the veneration of fallen soldiers (not specifically members of the FPM but soldiers of the Lebanese Armed Forces), the remembrance of national holidays (e.g. Independence Day) and political rituals (e.g. the placing of flowers at the Statue of the Unknown Soldier). In this regard it seems that the FPM is compensating for the fact that it does not have as long of a history as a party with so many historical phases and turning points as older parties do. Moreover, the FPM stylizes itself as a "national" or "state party", endorsed by its large membership base that mostly comprises, but not limited to, the Christian communities.

The FM was created in the early 1990s by late Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, a billionaire with close ties to the Saudi royal family, whose assassination in 2005 led to the 'Independence Intifada'. The FM was transformed into a political party in August 2007 (official declaration as party in April 2009; founding conference in July 2010[52]).

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49 FPM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

50 FPM Official Representative (Nov. 2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

51 For further information on the political principles and aims of the FPM see Charter of the FPM (September 2005), accessed September 15, 2015, http://ftp.tayyar.org/Tayyar/FPMParty/CharterNLogo/Charter.htm) and Bogdan Szajkowski (Ed.), *Political Parties of the World*, 6th ed. (London: John Harper, 2005), 375. For further information on Michel Aoun as Lebanese politician see also Philippe Abirached, "Charisme, pouvoir et communauté politique: La figure de Michel Aoun" [Charisma, power and political community: The persona of Michel Aoun], in Leaders et partisans au Liban, ed. Franck Mermier and Sabrina Mervin (Paris: Karthala, 2012), 35-56.

52 FM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

Nevertheless, the FM had already participated in the parliamentary elections of 2005, when it won by far the most seats (36 of 128). Since then, it has remained the largest block in parliament and its leader, Saad al-Hariri, held the office of Prime Minister from November 2009 to June 2011. Although the party strongly supports Secularism and has a number of members from different confessional backgrounds, it is largely supported by Sunni Muslims. The FM is a center-right party, ideologically inclined to Liberalism and an observing member of the Liberal International, the international federation for liberal political parties.[53] The FM is rooted in the political and educational work of Rafiq al-Hariri from the late 1970s up until the early 1990s.[54] Hariri had a pivotal role in brokering the Ta'if Agreement in 1989, which officially ended the Civil War in Lebanon. Having said this, it becomes obvious that the memory and legacy of Hariri is the principal aspect of the commemorative culture of the FM. This is expressed in the form of memorial sites centered on Hariri and commemorative festivities concerning Hariri's death, the 'Independence Intifada' that followed and his role in brokering the Ta'if Agreement.[55] Moreover, the FM celebrates all national holidays and thereby, like the FPM, compensates for its comparable short party history and at the same time stages itself as an 'official party' of the Lebanese State.

3.2 Common themes and narratives

As different as the political parties in our sample group are, they share common themes in their particular cultures of remembrance that are intrinsic elements of the political culture in Lebanon and the region, and, in some cases, characteristic of post-conflict societies on a global scale. One of these themes is the veneration of the parties' leaders, especially for assassinated or executed leadership personalities. Be it Antoun Saadeh, Kamal Jumblatt, Bashir Gemayel, Rafiq al-Hariri, Pierre Amin Gemayel or Imad Mughniyah, their respective parties celebrate the memory and legacy of their leaders through a number of different activities, including annual commemorative festivities and political iconographies. These means not only keep alive the memory of the leaders, but also transform them into iconic symbolic figures, staged as heroes and martyrs for their communities. Past actions of present leaders are also remembered and their veneration is construed on the remembrance of their contributions to the parties' histories. This is especially important for the FPM, which has no assassinated leaders to commemorate and therefore concentrates its personality cult on the party

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[53] For detailed information on the ideological position and the political program of the FM see its party platform: Future Movement, *Story of a Future* (48 pages) and Future Movement, *Future Movement Economic and Social Program* (84 pages).

[54] FM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

[55] FM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

founder and current leader, General Aoun. He is venerated as 'the combatant leader' and the 'resistance leader', because of his position as former general of the Lebanese army during the Civil War and his resistance to the Syrian hegemony over Lebanon in the post-war period.[56] As Aoun is not a member of one of the traditional leading families of Lebanon (zu`amā'), his veneration is connoted with an explicit opposition toward 'feudalism'[57], which in turn, highlights his personal leadership qualities:

"There is a difference between a leader and a za'im.[58] The leader is a charismatic, intellectual person who may lead their people for their good, but the za'im is different, he is feudal most of the time in Lebanon; he fulfils his benefits and then leaves the people [...] General Aoun is not a za'im, he is a leader and he treats us in an equal manner and he has a great culture and memory."[59]

The same holds true for those other leaders that do not descend from one of the major families in Lebanon, like Samir Geagea or Hassan Nasrallah. They came into power during the Civil War, when power structures were undergoing changes that allowed new military leaders to replace established zu`amā'. Contemporary leaders from a 'feudal' background are also venerated for their past and present actions. For example, Walid Jumblatt is celebrated by the PSP as one of the most important leaders during the Civil War and for his about-face afterwards when he criticized his own role in the war.[60] Nevertheless, the remembrance of assassinated leaders has a peculiar emotional quality as - according to party narratives - these leaders became 'martyrs' in the service of the party and the community. Personality cults are a central motif of political cultures on a global scale, but they are especially apparent in West Asia and North Africa (e.g. the cult for Gamal Abdel Nasser, Hafez al-Assad or Yasser Arafat).

Another theme commonly found in post-conflict societies in general, and especially in the WANA region, is the glorification of martyrs. This theme is shared by almost all

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56 One of the most important slogans of the FPM during the time of Aoun's exile was "Aoun is returning", which shows the importance of Aoun as a symbol and leader for the political movement. FPM Official Representative (Nov. 2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

57 Concerning the problem of applying the concept of "feudalism" to the region of Bilad al-Sham cf. Birgit Schäbler, *Aufstände im Drusenbergland. Ethnizität und Integration einer ländlichen Gesellschaft Syriens vom Osmanischen Reich bis zur staatlichen Unabhängigkeit 1850-1949* [Rebellions in the Druze Mountain. Ethnicity and Integration in a Rural Community in Syria from the Ottoman Empire to Syrian Independence] (Gotha: Perthes, 1996), chapter 7, for Lebanon especially 90-93.

58 A za'im (Pl. zu`amā') is a political leader who stems from one of the traditional leading families in Lebanon. The zu`amā' system is a very pronounced and complex patronage system, which developed from a quasi-feudal system during the times of the Lebanese Emirate but constantly adapted to the requirements of modern times. Cf. Samir Khalaf, "Changing Forms of Political Patronage in Lebanon," in *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies*, ed. Ernest Gellner, John Waterbury (London: Duckworth, 1977), 185-205 and Ahmed Nizar Hamzeh, "Clientalism, Lebanon: Roots and Trends," *Middle Eastern Studies* 37 (2001): 167-178.

59 FPM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

60 PSP Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

parties in our sample group and by others as well. Political parties in Lebanon honor the combatants who died in the Civil War and in other armed conflicts with political posters, songs, monuments and commemorative festivities. They are considered heroes of the community who have died for a just cause, therefore serving as role models. The veneration of martyrs is not only important with regard to the mobilization of the partisans during the large commemorative festivities, but the party itself is glorified by the number of martyrs fallen in their name.[61] For example, the Kataeb Party is proud to have several thousands of martyrs who, according to the party narrative, gave up their lives "in the service of Lebanon"[62]:

„We have […] more followers up there, martyrs, than we have here. We are the party of martyrs. […] We are the party who gave the most martyrs to Lebanon. The Gemayel family and all the Kataeb party."[63]

The other parties also make huge efforts to honor their martyrs. The LF organize large commemoration masses for their martyrs every year in order to remember those who fought and sacrificed their lives for the party and the community. Each year, the martyr's mass has a different thematic focus and political message that relates to the current situation in Lebanon.[64] The FPM is proud to not only remember their own martyrs, but all the fallen soldiers of the Lebanese Armed Forces, a particular focus of General Aoun as former commander-in-chief of the Lebanese Armed Forces.[65] The SSNP also claims a huge number of martyrs from different historical periods of Lebanon. For example, their member Said Fakhereddine is venerated as the only martyr of the struggle for Independence in 1943. The SSNP especially honors their male and female martyrs from the period of resistance against the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon. An important date in this regard is the 24th of September 1982, when SSNP member Khaled Alwan killed an Israeli officer and wounded two Israeli soldiers in an attack at the Wimpy Café in Hamra. Every year on the 24th of September, the SSNP organizes a ceremony to commemorate their martyrs and the liberation of Beirut.[66]

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[61] Cf. Zeina Maasri, *Off the Wall. Political Posters of the Lebanese Civil War* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 87f.

[62] Fi khidmat Lubnan ("In the Service of Lebanon") is one of the main slogans of the Kataeb Party.

[63] Kataeb Official Representative (2010). [Interview on political parties and political culture in Lebanon]. An excellent example is also the video clip the Kataeb Party prepared for their 75th anniversary in 2010 and in which all the names of their martyrs were used to form the party's logo, a stylized cedar.

[64] LF Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

[65] FPM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

[66] SSNP Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

Interestingly, most of the political parties in Lebanon claim to have been or to still be part of a resistance movement. There are three distinct narratives of resistance in Lebanon: 'Islamic Resistance', 'Lebanese (or sometimes Christian) Resistance' and the 'Left Resistance'. The importance of a self-stylization as an 'Islamic Resistance' movement for Hezbollah has been highlighted before. Still, for many of the other parties, the adherence to one of these narratives is equally important and an essential part of their cultures of remembrance and constructing their collective identities. This is, of course, due to the fact that their self-stylization as a resistance movement transforms the fight of the parties into a struggle for liberation and the militia men into resistance fighters, which provides them with the nimbus of underdog heroes, willing to sacrifice their lives for the freedom and liberation of their communities. The narrative of the 'Lebanese Resistance' had been developed during the first years of the Civil War by the "Kaslik Circle", a group of Christian intellectuals, and the "Lebanese Committee for Research" at the Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik, which itself had been established by the Lebanese Maronite Order.[67] The 'Lebanese Resistance' is a concept that aims at defending the independence and sovereignty of Lebanon and is therefore directed against any foreign powers in Lebanon, namely the Palestinian Movement during the Civil War, the Syrian influence during and after the war, and at present, against the influence of Iran via Hezbollah, which is widely regarded as their Lebanese proxy. The Kataeb Party, and especially, the LF under Bashir Gemayel, embraced this narrative intellectually and emotionally and it is still of greatest importance for their self-perception.[68] Between the war and the 'Independence Intifada', both parties' student movements were highly active within the 'Student Resistance' against the Syrian influence in Lebanon. The FPM also participated in the 'Lebanese Resistance' during their phase as an underground movement. Their logo at this time was the Greek letter omega to signify resistance.[69] After the Syrian withdrawal of 2005, the FPM regarded the aim of the resistance against the Syrian hegemony in Lebanon as fulfilled. Since then the party advocates the establishment of diplomatic relations between the governments of Lebanon and Syria. By this, the FPM sets themselves apart from the two other large Christian parties. Nevertheless, an FPM party official

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[67] The circle and the research center function as the intellectual center of the Lebanese Front, the political alliance of the most influential Christian politicians at the beginning of the Civil War. Cf. Michael Kuderna, *Christliche Gruppen im Libanon. Kampf um Ideologie und Herrschaft in einer unfertigen Nation* [Christian Groups in Lebanon. Fight for Ideology, Power in an Unfinished Nation] (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1983), 99 and Theodor Hanf, *Koexistenz im Krieg: Staatszerfall und Entstehen einer Nation im Libanon* [Co-Existence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation] (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1990), 301 and note 105.

[68] For example the motto of the jointly staged commemorative festivities for Bashir Gemayel in 2008 was Nahna Muqawama Lubnaniyeh ("We are the Lebanese Resistance").

[69] FPM Official Representative (Nov. 2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

emphasized that the FPM still has a resistance attitude that is geared towards the fight of corruption, constitutional violence and foreign intervention in Lebanon.[70]

The memory of being a part of the 'Left Resistance' is important for several parties in Lebanon; in our sample group the PSP and the SSNP and beyond those also other parties that participated in the Lebanese National Movement during the war (e.g. the Lebanese Communist Party or the Communist Action Organization in Lebanon). The basic concept of the 'Left Resistance' is based on supporting the Palestinian cause and the strong opposition against Israel and its occupation of South Lebanon.[71] The SSNP is proud to consider themselves the first party to have started the resistance against Israel in South Lebanon in 1976. An SSNP official representative explains that the remembrance of the resistance as a collective defense against the enemy by the partisans is one of the key themes on which the collective identity of the SSNP is built.[72] For the participation of the PSP in the resistance against Israel, an official representative explained:

„We consider that all Lebanese unanimously agree that Israel is our enemy. And we know very well that Israel will do its best to attack Lebanon when it can. It has a historical grudge against Lebanon being a democratic and an open country. […] Our party has been one pioneer party in resisting the Israelis since 1982 even before Hezbollah was born […]. Of course later on the logistic, the financial, the military reasons have not allowed us to continue the resistance, but we have always been with the resistance as long as land has been occupied […]."[73]

Another shared theme which is of special importance to all parties that were founded in the 1980s or earlier is the remembrance of the war and violence. The memory of the war takes very distinct shapes for each of the parties, according to their specific role in it and according to their perspective on the roots of the conflict. It includes victories and traumatic events as massacres and is depicted as a story of the struggle of the respective party for a higher cause (defending the community, existential conflict for survival, liberation from oppression etc.).

All the representatives from the political parties in our sample agree that the war was an experience not to be repeated and, therefore, place a high importance on remembering it. Beyond that, the period of war is also considered an integral and decisive part of the parties' particular histories and important for their collective

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[70] FPM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past] and FPM Official Representative (Nov. 2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

[71] One of the hymns of this resistance narrative which reflects the zeitgeist of that time is al-Jisr ("The Bridge", 1983) by Marcel Khalife with its lyrics based on a poem by Lebanese poet Khalil Hawi, who was a member of the SSNP. The song by Khalife even served as an unofficial party hymn for the PSP for some years during the 1975-1990 war.

[72] SSNP Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

[73] PSP Official Representative (2009), [Interview on political parties and political culture in Lebanon].

identities. It should be added that most of the parties also foster some kind of war nostalgia in their cultures of remembrance. However, this war nostalgia is not a longing for a new war, but a romantic view of times of cohesiveness, comradeship and military strength. Each party has its own narrative concerning the war and justifications for their participation in the war, all of which are in line with their ideological positions and self-perceptions.

The LF, for instance, remember the war as an existential struggle for survival of the Christian community in Lebanon. They regard their initial participation in the war as an act of self-defense against the Palestinian armed presence on Lebanese soil and the war against Israel that the Palestinian guerillas were fighting in Lebanon as a substitute battleground. They also regarded their military participation in the war as something that was forced onto the Christian parties: "We did what we had to do".[74] The war is also a central motif in the culture of remembrance of the Kataeb Party. During their mass gathering in Forum de Beyrouth on the occasion of the 72nd party anniversary and the second commemoration of the assassination of Pierre Amin Gemayel[75] in 2008, the party showed four short movies about important phases of Lebanese history that were also important phases of Kataeb's history, both regarded as closely intertwined. All the phases dealt with violent struggles in Lebanese history. While the first movie covered the struggle for independence, the second addressed the violent conflict in 1958, in which the party was one of the main actors. The third movie was about the Civil War. It first depicted the Palestinian guerilla fighters, opponents of the Kataeb, as a threatening force, through the selective choice of original footage, changes in speed, fast cutting and menacing music in the background. After this, it illustrated the leaders and combatants of the Kataeb in heroic pictures, complete with an epic and elevating soundtrack. The last movie, following the same pattern of depiction, dealt with the phase of the Syrian occupation of Lebanon, the student resistance and the 'Independence Intifada'.[76]

At this point, it should be added that the memory of the war can be quite different when taking into account the official culture of remembrance of the party on the one hand, and the individual perspectives of the partisans on the other hand. The partisans contribute to the commemorative culture of their party by differing means and often emphasize aspects related to their personal experiences, even if those are not in line with the official culture of remembrance. On YouTube videos, Facebook pages and

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[74] LF Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

[75] Pierre Amine Gemayel, the eldest son of party president Amine Gemayel, played an important role in the 'Independence Intifada'. He was assassinated on 21 November2006, the 70th birthday of the Kataeb Party, by which his murderers also symbolically targeted the celebration of the history of the party.

[76] Recording of the mass gathering of the Kataeb Party in Forum de Beyrouth, 21 November 2008. Courtesy of the media office of the Kataeb Party.

Internet forums the partisans create their own iconographies and texts in which they often accentuate the war nostalgia more than the political parties do. They also place an uncritical focus on the heroic and victorious events of their parties and confessional communities, remember their fallen comrades and the martyrs of the party.

An especially interesting case is the Future Movement. The party deliberately distinguishes itself from the other parties in Lebanon precisely due to its non-participation during the violent conflict. As Ahmad al-Hariri, General Secretary of the FM, explained, the FM's, "history labeled the party as the only Lebanese political entity that didn't have any bloody/violent past […]".[77] Instead of remembering the war, the FM remembers Rafiq al-Hariri's efforts to bring peace to Lebanon by means of his contributions to the Ta'if Agreement in 1989. It also regards the history of post-war Lebanon and the history of the FM as "highly interconnected":

"Contemporary Lebanon is post Ta'if Lebanon, turning the page on violence, armed clashes and instability, and starting a new chapter of conflict resolution and enhancing the establishment of strong state institutions that can enforce stability and preserve Lebanon as a diversified and harmonized society. In this regard, Future Movement's political slogans [were] developed in post Ta'if Lebanon, calling for the rule of law, for freedom and liberty and as well economic prosperity and social development."[78]

The Lebanese state is also a focal point in the cultures of remembrance of Lebanese political parties. Each party connects its history with the history of Lebanon and the past achievements of the parties are seen as contributions to the country's historical development process. Although some of the parties maintained their own orders of violence and substituted state institutions and services with their own civil administrations during the war, they all highlight that they never wanted to replace the state and that they were only obliged to fulfill these functions for their respective communities because the state had collapsed during the war. Even Hezbollah, often criticized for building up "a state within the state", declares in its manifesto of 2009:

"We want Lebanon to be free, sovereign and independent, generous, impregnably strong and able, a presence within the equations of the region, and a main contributor shaping the present and the future as it has always contributed to the configuration of history. One of the key conditions for the creation of such a homeland and for ensuring its sustainability is the presence of a strong, capable and impartial state, a political system that truly reflects the will of the people and their aspirations for justice, freedom, security, stability, well-being and dignity. These goals are shared by all the Lebanese. We are all working hand in hand towards their achievement."[79]

The LF also remember Bashir Gemayel in the context of building up a strong state and regard their own history as the struggle to fulfill his dream of building a new Lebanon,

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[77] FM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

[78] FM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

[79] Alagha, *Hezbollah's Documents*, 122f.

a lawful, democratic state in which each individual has their rights and where there is no need for political patronage (‘feudalism’).[80] Thus, their slogan for the annual commemoration of Bashir in 2010 was “Hilm Jamhuriyya” (“Dream of a Republic”). The Kataeb Party envisions itself as the defender of the independence and sovereignty of Lebanon and is often characterized as a surrogate of the state[81]. The FPM also propagates a strong state and, as mentioned before, celebrates all national holidays, especially Independence Day and March 14, which serves them as an occasion to remember their martyrs and celebrates the memory of Aoun’s return from exile.[82]

Despite these and other shared themes in the cultures of remembrance of political parties in Lebanon, there are significant differences in their specific narratives of the past. Of course all parties who have participated in the war deal with their memory of it within their commemorative cultures. It is also obvious that they remember the war, its origins, and outcomes differently as well as interpret its particular events from different perspectives. A glorious victory for one group may be a traumatic defeat for another; a heroic leader of one party may be anathema to another; a particular massacre may be justified as self-defense by one group while being regarded as a disproportionate and brutal act of revenge for another. Having said this, it becomes clear that although there are common themes, it would be a truly Herculean task to actually adapt and adjust all these different narratives and [hi]stories into one single, national narrative and considered the basis for any history curriculum on which all parties in Lebanon agree. Furthermore, the magnitude of a process required to negotiate any kind of agreement on a single interpretation of Lebanon’s past will always bear the risk of further conflict as such negotiations would surely put the different parties under a great amount of pressure by their respective communities. Any party’s community can be expected to hold on to the specific aspects of their own group’s narratives, while at the same time, hoping to bring change to the narratives of other parties, insofar as to make them conform with their own.

3.3 Remembering through political iconographies and rituals

Political parties in Lebanon use a number of symbolic forms and practices in their cultures of remembrance. We categorize them into three groups: political rituals (mass gatherings, memorial marches, commemorative festivities, party jubilees and other staged events and public performances), political iconographies and memorial sites (political posters, statues, monuments, museums and buildings like old party

80 LF Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

81 See for example Frank Stoakes, “The Supervigilantes: the Lebanese Kataeb Party as a Builder, Surrogate and Defender of the State,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 11 (1975): 215-236.

82 FPM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

headquarters), and audio-visual media and publications (songs, movies, books, party newspapers and other publications). An official representative of the PSP emphasizes that all elements of the commemorative culture are equally important and they all "tell us a story about history"[83]. Most parties give the greatest importance to the staging of mass events in their culture of remembrance because it allows them to propagate a political message, to draw media attention to the party and to show their ability for mobilization. An official representative from the Kataeb Party and organizer in charge of the political mass spectacle on occasion of the 75th party jubilee in December 2010, explained:

„Events are a pretext to do politics. And to communicate politics. […] [I]t's marketing also […] showing them that we are strong […]. How do you show that you are strong? You show that you can mobilize people."[84]

Especially the large parties have professional media and Public Relation divisions and special committees in charge of organizing jubilees and commemoration events. In the case of mass gatherings, often all central and regional departments of a party and its affiliated organizations (women, youth and student organizations, scout groups, worker's unions, etc.) work together to prepare the celebration. Considering the huge competition for members and political influence among the numerous political parties in Lebanon, most of them have a very high professional standard when it comes to organizing these events. Usually, they employ a large amount of funds, human resources, and time in the process of their staging.[85] For example, the SSNP has three occasions every year that are related to the memory of Antoun Saadeh: his birthday on March 1st, the founding of the SSNP on November 16th and the execution of Saadeh on July 8th. These events are often celebrated with a huge event, like a mass gathering at Biel or Forum de Beyrouth, with sometimes tens of thousands of partisans attending. Moreover, there are numerous smaller activities in the regions, which are oriented towards the specific interests of the partisans in the particular party cell. These events include: festivals, seminars, dinners, lectures, speeches and other intellectual happenings.[86]

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83 PSP Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

84 Kataeb official representative (2011). [Interview on political parties and political culture in Lebanon].

85 See for example the promotion clip for the commemoration festivity for the martyrs of the LF in 2011 on the parties' YouTube channel, accessed September 04, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_F7-RVLy7us.

86 SSNP Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past]. The SSNP publishes every year a special edition of its newspaper al-Binaa which documents all activities from the different branches of the party on the occasion of its founding day.

The mass gatherings are staged in a way that turns them into deeply emotional events, during which the achievements and the losses of the past are remembered collectively and a political message is spread by the party leadership. They are geared as much to the present and the future, as to the past. Political spectacles combine a number of symbolic forms and practices of the commemorative culture into one huge event; large political posters adorn the walls, political songs are played, political speeches are delivered, political slogans are chanted collectively, and most importantly, the party leadership comes together with the partisans. While the huge spectacles are staged in event halls, many mass gatherings are also performed outdoors at memorial sites. The Kataeb, for instance, stages an annual commemoration for Pierre Amine Gemayel in Jdeideh at the monument that was erected in the location of his assassination in 2006. While the leadership comes together in a nearby church for a memorial mass, the student section performs a flag march on the street to the tunes of the marching band of the Kataeb scouts and in front of an audience of partisans that gathers along the street. Wreaths are laid down before the monument and slogans like "Pierre hayy fīnā ("Pierre lives in us") are chanted collectively.[87]

An important feature of these mass events is the collective performance of rituals. One of the main functions of a political ritual is the suspension of time, by letting the past come alive through ritualized re-enactment.[88] Through the regular repetition of a physical symbolic act with an emotional quality, the participants create a link to the past in accordance with the party-related political myths and narratives. The world-view of the party is thereby confirmed in the present.[89] Moreover, the individual partisan is integrated into the in-group more tightly and at the same time strengthens and publicly expresses its collective identity through the active participation in the emotionally charged ritual performance.

A very good example in this regard is the annual commemoration for Bashir Gemayel, which is jointly staged by the LF and the Kataeb Party on Sassine Square on September 14th. Sune Haugbolle describes it as, "the most visible commemorative phenomenon in Ashraffiya".[90] The "secular cult of veneration" staged around his memory crystallizes in this annual ceremony that is characterized by a "particular combination of self-assertion and nostalgia".[91] The whole event is ritualized and

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[87] Participant observation at the commemoration for Pierre Amin Gemayel in Jdeideh on 20 November 2011.

[88] Cf. Rüdiger Voigt, „Mythen, Rituale und Symbole in der Politik" [Myths, Rituals and Symbols in Politics], in *Symbole der Politik. Politik der Symbole*, ed. Rüdiger Voigt (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1989), 9-37, here 13.

[89] Cf. Ibid., 12.

[90] Haugbolle, *War and Memory*, 179.

[91] Sune Haugbolle, "The Secular Saint. Iconography and Ideology in the Cult of Bashir Gemayel," in *Politics of Worship in the Contemporary Middle East. Sainthood in Fragile States*, ed. Andreas Bandak and Mikkel Bille (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2013), 191-212, here 196.

repeated every year following a similar pattern: a Christian mass is held in a nearby church, political speeches are given, a mass gathering takes place around the monument on Sassine Square. Bashir's son, Nadim, lights a fire-bowl in front of the monument and the partisans march with wreaths towards the Kataeb Headquarter in Ashrafiyya, collectively chanting slogans and carrying party flags of the Kataeb, the LF, as well as flags with the red cross of the 'Lebanese Resistance'. Then the wreaths and red roses are laid down in front of the memorial plaque, and afterwards the partisans line up to shake hands with party officials and Gemayel family members.[92]

As has been mentioned before, political iconographies and memorial sites often play important roles in the performance of political rituals during mass gatherings, and they are in themselves very important elements of commemorative cultures. Statues, for example, are expressions of the veneration of political leaders and the heroization of regular combatants. Good examples of this are the statue of Pierre Gemayel in Bikfaya, the statue of Rafiq al-Hariri at the location of his assassination at the Corniche in Beirut, or a victory statue in the Chouf Mountains close to Moukhtara. The latter one depicts a Druze fighter in traditional garb and a militia man of the PSP's Popular Army in military uniform, both pointing their rifles to the sky in a gesture of victory. Also important for political cultures of remembrance, are the monuments and cemeteries for the martyrs of the parties who participated in the war. For example, the SSNP has cemeteries with monuments for their martyrs in Koura, Akkar, Halba and in the Chouf.[93] The LF maintains cemeteries for their martyrs in Mar Mikhayel, Mar Mitr, and one at the church of St. Elige in Mayfouk near Jbeil, which is of great importance to their commemorative culture. Each year in September, a Christian mass is held in the church to honor all members of the LF that were killed during the war.[94]

Monuments and ornately decorated gravesites for assassinated leaders, like the tent over the burial site of Rafiq al-Hariri on Martyr's Square, or the tomb of Kamal Jumblatt next to the mountain fortress of the Jumblatts in Moukhtara, serve as places of pilgrimage for partisans and political sympathizers. They emphasize the quasi-religious intensity of the secular cults of veneration for political leaders - which of course is not a phenomenon limited to Lebanon or the region. Alas, a new trend in Lebanon seems to be the construction of party museums. Mleeta, the "landmark of resistance", has been mentioned before, but the Kataeb Party is also in the process of constructing a museum in Haret Sakhr, near Jounieh, situated in a building with a

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92 Participant observation during the commemoration for Bashir Gemayel on 14 September 2010.

93 SSNP Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

94 LF Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

Phoenician boat on the top. It will include a room for the commemoration of the party's martyrs including an eternal flame and all the names of the several thousand martyrs written on the walls, a room depicting the crucial turning points in the history of the party, and an exhibition of all books and newspapers published by the Kataeb, among other things.[95] The SSNP is also in the process of building a museum in the village of Dhour Chweir, in Northern Metn, where Antoun Saadeh's estate was situated. It will exhibit his works and will also have halls for lectures and a stage for events.[96] The LF are also planning a museum dedicated to the Civil War in order to preserve the memory of their combatants and martyrs. The party has set up a committee to establish the museum. It will include photos, documents and other material related to the war, for example all minutes of the military command of the LF from 1978 to 1994.[97]

Lebanon also has a long tradition in using political posters, which serve as "symbolic sites of struggle".[98] They are a media of remembrance with a particular ideological dimension. The first political posters date back to the conflict of 1958[99] and the poster production reached its peak in the ideologically heightened atmosphere before and during the first years of the Civil War. Up until the 'Independence Intifada', posters remained one of the most important symbolic forms of political culture in Lebanon[100] and are still an omnipresent feature of its visual political culture. Besides their other main functions - namely demarcation of territory, mobilization of partisans, and vilifying the political opponents - their role in the cultures of remembrance of political parties is outstanding. First and foremost, posters are an instrument for the remembrance of assassinated leaders.[101] The leaders are often depicted in a very typical pose and specific features are portrayed in an exaggerated way, turning them into iconic, symbolic figures. A very good example is the depiction of Bashir Gemayel in military camouflage and pilot glasses, in a seated position, with an assault rifle over his knees. This portrait became so iconic that even the sole depiction of his silhouette

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[95] Kataeb Official Representative (2011). [Interview on political parties and political culture in Lebanon].

[96] The party started the work on the museum four years ago and plans the opening for 2018-2020. SSNP Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past]. For further information see also the back cover of the special edition of al-Binaa for the 82th party jubilee of the SSNP in 2014.

[97] LF Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

[98] Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 3.

[99] Cf. Haugbolle, *War and Memory*, 165.

[100] During the so called "Cedar Revolution" new social media replaced the posters to some extent. Cf. Lina Khatib, *Image Politics in the Middle East. The Role of the Visual in Political Struggle* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 15.

[101] As Zeina Maasri points out, more than one-third of the posters used in the Civil War are dedicated exclusively to the veneration of political leaders. Cf. Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 56.

in this pose is sufficient to let the observer know who is portrayed on the poster.[102] Another example is the depiction of Kamal Jumblatt after his assassination. His facial features, especially his forehead wrinkles, are overdrawn like a caricature in order to symbolize his character traits and corroborate his function as an icon and "role model for martyrdom, genuine resistance and sacrifice".[103]

The third important sub-group of 'media of remembrance' or 'lieux de memoire' in Lebanese political culture consists of political songs and movies about the parties' histories or about the life of assassinated leaders. Books, special editions of party newspapers and other publications printed on the occasion of party jubilees and for the purpose of remembering the parties' past are also included. The production of political songs by the parties themselves and also by the partisans is an old tradition in Lebanese political culture as well. During the Civil War, they served as medium for mobilization, motivation, and remembrance; they are still sold and played today at party events or used for underscoring YouTube videos made by partisans. There are countless songs addressing the martyrs and leadership, as well as the parties' victories. In more recent times, the larger political parties, like Hezbollah, have their own production department for songs that are accompanied by music clips. Political parties in Lebanon explicitly stage a symbolic war through songs and music clips to celebrate their own history and defame political opponents.[104]

In addition to political songs and music videos, documentaries and movies in dedication of political leaders, martyrs, and the history of the party from their particular point of view are also an important medium within the commemorative cultures of political parties. An example for this is a film produced by the Kataeb media office that very emotionally celebrates the personal life and political work of Pierre Amine Gemayel, including footage of his wedding and of his two young sons.[105] Another example of a documentary that was not produced by a party itself, but became an important medium of remembrance for them, is the 196-minute biography of Kamal Jumblatt "al-Rafiq Kamal Bey" ("Comrade Kamal Bey"), which recounts

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102 See for example a poster of Pierre Sadek from 1983 depicting Bashir Gemayel in Zeina Maasri's online database "Signs of Conflict", accessed September 15, 2015 http://www.signsofconflict.com/Archive/poster_details/2117.

103 Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 59. See as an example a poster of Jumblatt from the Lebanese National Movement in the database "Signs of Conflict", accessed September 15, 2015, http://www.signsofconflict.com/Archive/poster_details/1430.

104 A recent example is the conflict around the song "Seal your victory in Yabroud" about Hezbollah's participation in the Syrian civil war of Ali Barakat, a supporter of Hezbollah. Cf. Ben Hubbard, Hwaida Saad, "Song Opens Musical Front in Civil War Over Syria," *The New York Times*, 2 March 2014, A6.

105 DVD "Pierre Gemayel", courtesy of the Media Office of Kataeb Party.

Jumblatt's life with historical footage and is recommended by PSP officials.[106] Also, the newspapers and publishing houses of parties regularly print books and brochures with the purpose of celebrating the parties' history. These can include old texts and speeches of party leaders, founding documents, and historical pictures, depicting the leadership and partisans during historical turning points.

From what has been said about the different forms of media of remembrance, it can be noted that political parties in Lebanon basically use the same variety of symbolic forms and practices in their cultures of remembrance. All the rituals, iconographies and media are used for maintaining the political memory of the individual party and only properly function together. However, there are small differences in how and to what degree a specific medium is used by a particular party. The smaller parties, for instance, do not produce their own music clips and do not have the same resources for professionally staging huge political spectacles. Some parties use political posters mostly in small sizes, while others prefer them in larger than life sizes. Not all parties have plans to build a museum - the PSP, for example, held an exhibition about Kamal Jumblatt in the palace of Beiteddine from 1991 to 2003, but Walid Jumblatt decided to close the exhibition in symbolic protest against Emile Lahoud, who used the palace as his summer residence and deployed a military squadron there.[107]

3.4 Purposes of political cultures of remembrance

Having outlined the wide variety of symbolic forms and cultural practices employed by political parties in Lebanon in the previous section, it becomes very obvious that they invest a great amount of resources in creating and maintaining particular cultures of remembrance. This is not surprising in principle, as all nation-states, political organizations, and institutions generally have a great interest in the formation of a political memory as basis for a national consciousness and other political purposes. What is indeed remarkable in Lebanon is the high intensity of contestation around memory, which is based on the lack of consensus regarding a single national memory and the high number of political parties that have different views on the past. Moreover, the numerous conflicts in the contemporary history of Lebanon and a tendency to solve political disputes by the use of violence, left a distinct imprint on the particular cultures of remembrance of political parties in which the memory of violence is an important factor. So, what concrete purposes does memory fulfill for the parties?

First and foremost, political parties in general use memory for constructing and maintaining collective commemorative cultures, which serve as foundation for the

[106] „Al-Rafiq Kamal Bey", directed by Jean Aoun, presented by George Ghanem, produced by LBCI (2005, 3 DVDs).

[107] Interview with Prof. Mounir Atallah, curator of the exhibition (2013). [Interview on political parties and political culture in Lebanon] and conversation with Walid Jumblatt (2013).

formation of collective identities. The interpretation of the past takes place from a specific point of view that is in accordance with the ideological world-view of the political party and its meta-narratives. Thus, the party generates specific in-group perspectives and creates socio-cultural boundaries for distinguishing the respective in-group from ‘the others’. This allows for a strong identification of the individual partisan with the party as a whole. The partisan regards themself as part of a large community that shares the same political and socio-cultural attitudes and perceptions. Within the Lebanese post-war political culture, this particularly includes narratives of suffering and sacrifice as well as triumph and heroism (memories of specific battles or massacres, martyr’s cults etc.). For example, an SSNP official representative described the history of the party, especially the history of the SSNP’s struggle, as its collective identity, a ‘struggle identity’, based on its history and its sacrifices.[108] Shared memories like these foster an emotional bond within the in-group, corroborated by a mutual justification of the own parties’ role in the Civil War (or in other conflicts) and a shared perspective on ‘right’ and ‘wrong’. The downside of this memory-based way to construct a collective identity is the clear distinction of the own party from other political groups. What constructs the identity of a certain community is sometimes precisely what destroys the collective identity of another community. In that respect, the creation of different commemorative cultures with contrasting interpretations of the past reinforces antagonisms between different groups of society instead of easing them. History and memory are used as ‘symbolic weapons’, which inflict ‘symbolic wounds’ on political opponents.[109]

Another important purpose of the commemorative cultures of political parties in Lebanon is showing strength and publicly staging the party as a powerful actor in the political field. This is achieved mainly through large performative activities in their cultures of remembrance (commemorations, party jubilees and other mass gatherings). These political spectacles, with their large number of attendants, are often host to several thousand partisan participants at venues like Forum de Beyrouth or Biel; their media coverage allow the parties to show that they are able to mobilize a large number of people. This celebration of strength is essential for generating a feeling of importance and security within the in-group. Towards the outside, it points out the relevance of the political group within the multi-party system in Lebanon and can act as a challenge towards political opponents. Furthermore, these events have a strong emotional quality, which serves the purpose of mobilizing passive members and recruiting new ones. The sympathizers, who often participate in these activities,

[108] SSNP Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].
[109] Cf. Fawwaz Traboulsi, “Foreword,” in Maasri, *Off the Wall,* xvii-xxi, here xix.

potentially get convinced to join the party and become active members. Hence, recruitment and mobilization can be regarded as another objective achieved by political parties through performative practices and political iconographies in their cultures of remembrance.

Another very important aspect is group participation in political rituals at memorial sites. The function of annual rituals is to let the past come alive and connect it with the present. The linking of the past with the present and the future is a main objective of political memory in general. The present position of the party is justified and legitimized by creating a line of continuity from the past to the present. All party officials interviewed for this article agreed on the importance of the past to the present and the future. An FPM official representative remarked on the importance of the past to teach "generations for the future so they may develop their future lives" and that "Aoun says that we do not want to forget the past [...] so we may learn how to build the future".[110] An LF official representative explained that "the history of the LF is its present, it's a continuity"[111] and from the SSNP, an official representative also emphasized the importance of the past for the present and the future of the party:

"The party is made up of concepts and goals and it is the struggle and the experience. This is our asset for the present and the future. So we may not talk about the party if we do not look at its history, because its history is its identity and formation."[112]

Equally pronounced is the position of the Kataeb Party in this regard. As an official representative explained:

"The party is able to think about the future because it has the experience of the past [...]. The Kataeb party lived through the past 75 years of problems in Lebanon and it knows very well what are the main issues that should be taken care of. That's why the Kataeb party is able today to propose new ideas and to think of a better future because it knows very well what are the real problems. [...] We try to use every experience as a positive experience, to learn from everything that happened, even the bad experience. You can use it positively by learning from the past experience and looking forward to solve these issues in a more scientific way [...]. Every lesson of the past is important today. Everything that happened in the past is still somewhere influencing our policy."[113]

The PSP official representative also described history as a continuous chain and different historical events as interconnected with each other. He regarded it as important to not only know one's own history, but also the perspective of others:

"You cannot plan for the future if you did not have an idea about the history. For that it is very important [...] for every member in the party to know the history of our party [and] the history of our country, the history of the symbols of politics here in Lebanon.

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[110] FPM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].
[111] LF Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].
[112] SSNP Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].
[113] Kataeb Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

To know about the history of another party [is] [...] also very important [in order] to [...] have a clear idea about how maybe the others acted or thought about our future, about our country, about our structure. We should know how the others thought of the others, what the other did. I think it's very, very important to know our history and the history of others."[114]

Another important reason that emerged from the interviews for remembering the past, is that one must learn from history, especially from its violent episodes, in order to prevent history from happening again in the future. The FPM official representative mentioned that Aoun visited Geagea right after his return to Lebanon. They talked about the importance of forgiving one another in order to move on. "We do not want to forget the past. We want to forgive the mistakes, but we should never forget so we may learn about the future."[115] The PSP organized a conference in April 2015 on the Civil War, which aimed at asking if and what people learned from the war. The PSP official representative also pointed out that Walid Jumblatt recurrently critically reassessed his participation in the Civil War and he appealed to youth to move away from violence, war and bloodshed.[116] But also the LF official representative emphasized the importance of forgiveness and that the LF ask forgiveness from all the Lebanese people while also forgiving the others. Nevertheless, there should be "a real committee on the Lebanese war to show who did wrong and who did not".[117] For example, the LF set up a Conflict Resolution Center and started a dialogue with the PSP in order to discuss the 'War of the Mountain',[118] which led to a meeting of religious people for three to four days, and the publication of a paper on how they experienced the war and how the perspective they had on the war changed after the dialogue session.[119]

But most of the time, attempts of the parties to reassess the past by discussing the memory of the war with each other are overshadowed by current political problems

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[114] PSP Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

[115] FPM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

[116] PSP Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

[117] LF Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

[118] The "War of the Mountain" was an especially violent episode of the Civil War in the Chouf region in 1983/84 which was fought between the LF and the "Popular Army" of the PSP. It was perceived as an existential struggle for survival from both sides and both parties made use of myths and narratives related to their confessional communities for mobilization (especially references to the Druze-Maronite war of 1860). The "War of the Mountain" ended with the victory of the PSP, the death of circa 1.500 Christians and the forced displacement of several thousand Christians from the region. Cf. Hanf, *Koexistenz im Krieg* [Co-Existence in Wartime Lebanon], 336; Traboulsi, *History of Modern Lebanon*, 224; Nazih Richani, *Dilemmas of Democracy and Political Parties in Sectarian Societies. The Case of the Progressive Socialist Party of Lebanon 1949-1996* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 101.

[119] LF Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

and so, dialogue is postponed. Nevertheless, the political party representatives interviewed for this study recognized the need for discussing and reassessing the past and learning about the perspectives of the others. One of the main shortcomings is that the individual initiatives remain mostly local and limited, like the above-mentioned dialogue between the LF and the PSP. Furthermore, the parties only seem to register their own attempts (their own leaders apologizing, their own activities to facilitate dialogue with other parties) and tend to ignore the actions of the other parties in this regard. Although all parties agree on reassessing the past and propagate to find a single narrative, a "compromise to make the same story",[120] there remains the problem that their narratives are not only incompatible but their cultures of remembrance are also created with the purpose of the formation and strengthening of a collective identity, which requires a clear distinction from 'the other'. Even the attempt to agree on a single narrative by opening the discussion about the Civil War again poses the risk of renewed conflict. As a PSP official representative stated:

"*Maybe the attempt to find the same story will open the discussion again about the Civil War. If we are going to sit on a round table to discuss how to make the same story of our history in Lebanon, everyone will open the old pages of our history. And we will reopen maybe if not a war, but a cold war again because every one of us will tell his own story about the history and so the discussion will lead not to find the same story of our history but to discuss again our differences not our common values. […] If we agree as political parties, let us destroy parts of our stories to make the same story, let us erase parts of our stories to make the same story, in my opinion for the future […] nevertheless we will find ourselves in a new dilemma, which is that the partisans will complain about letting go of part of this story with the excuse that. 'It's not your right to destroy it, this is the story of our community'.*"[121]

This emphasizes the multidimensional dilemma of political parties in Lebanon when it comes to concrete attempts in dealing with the past. Not only is it extremely difficult to agree with other political parties on a single narrative, but the party is also under pressure from their respective communities not to sacrifice 'their' particular story in order to find a compromise. Of particular importance here is that the war generation is still alive and remembers their own sacrifices for the party and their fallen comrades who died for the party and its position during the war. If the party officially admits to have been wrong or to have made mistakes, their deaths could be regarded as futile.

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[120] PSP Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

[121] Ibid.

4 POLITICAL PARTIES' ROLES, VISIONS AND APPROACHES IN FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

This fourth and final section presents findings that illustrate approaches to learning about difficult historical events, namely the Civil War.

4.1 Why and how to learn about the past

Conversations with official party representatives about purposes of remembering or learning about the past brought out a diversity of aims and approaches, but with a common vision of social cohesion through dialogue. The aim of learning about the Civil War that emerges as critical is to support the processes of healing[122] and reconciliation[123]. Another aim is to build a sense of citizenship for the country and history education should build that feeling of belonging to Lebanon.[124] Also, learning about the past, particularly about armed conflict, is viewed as necessary to avoid repeating similar episodes of violence and war.[125] Referring to a history that is "filled with bloodshed and destruction", history lessons become a building block for reconstruction, because "history helps citizens spot the light on their mistakes in order to correct them".[126] Indeed, "studying what happened before" will allow individuals to avoid "a new war that we don't want".[127]

When describing how best to learn about the difficult past (e.g. the Civil War), a tension emerges between establishing a single or conflict-free narrative to ensure security on the one hand, and on the other hand, the acknowledgement and use of different interpretations. For an FPM official representative, building a sense of belonging towards the country can most effectively be achieved by listing an accepted or official set of events "without adding and listing ideas" from confessional groups, because "this is a nation that should not be built on the basis of a political party or a religion; it should be built for all the people". Moreover, an education coordinator for the SSNP argued that a single narrative shows that the government has a position and an important one to promote because presenting a number of interpretations shows instability and chaos. In almost clear contrast, the Kataeb official representative

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[122] LF Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].
[123] Kataeb Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].
[124] FPM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].
[125] PSP Official Representative (2015). [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past] and SSNP Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].
[126] FPM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].
[127] LF Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

maintained that the approach of trying to find a consensus is unfair for minority groups, like Christians and, so, an approach with at least two views or interpretations is fairer.

While the FPM, SSNP, and Kataeb representatives described competing approaches to learning about historical events, the LF and PSP representatives revealed a conceptual tension: valuing different interpretations while fostering a collective memory. The LF representative explicitly denounced having one story about the past and argued to have "real dialogue" on historical accounts and events and "if there are differences let's…discuss…and respect our differences". At the same time, the creation of a collective memory would not only be an essential outcome, but also characteristic of Lebanese nationalism, because "Lebanon is the result of a convergence between differences".[128] The PSP representative also insisted on preserving sectarian-based accounts of the past, but to also establish a "common background about the Civil War" or focus on "common values", because learning different [or sectarian-based] histories could lead to further conflicts. The shared vision of embracing different interpretations of the past while creating a collective memory prompts a critical inquiry into how these visions can be managed together.

4.2 Formal and non-formal education

During the interviews, the party officials described their roles in provisions of education for young people. With the exception of Hezbollah, all official representatives claimed that their political parties do not organize activities at schools to commemorate or remember past events. Some parties, like the Kataeb Party and LF, assert that they neither have the funds nor the financial support from other countries to build schools. In parties like the PSP and FM, their respective founders Kamal Joumblatt and Rafiq el Hariri financially backed the construction and opening of a few private schools. School visits and informal conversations with school teachers suggest that initiatives to commemorate the party's founder (e.g. celebrating the birth date, remembering date of passing, commemorating life achievements) comes strictly from the school.

Other parties' relationships with schools are primarily acting as third parties to provide children from low-income families with financial aid. Interviews with LF and FPM official representatives, for example, explained that their roles in schools are focused on supporting children who are unable to meet school tuition. In the case of LF, an official representative described how they turn to partisans residing outside the country to support children who are unable to afford school tuition. To raise funds, the LF has worked on creating connections between the Lebanese Diaspora and families

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[128] Ibid.

with children in Lebanon in financial need.[129] FPM initiatives have focused on mediating with schools to provide scholarships to children in need.[130]

4.3 Activities organized by political parties with the intention to provide young people with mostly non-formal education and training

The LF, PSP, and SSNP described in detail the educational programs that they have designed and started to implement. While all three target young adults, the SSNP have programs also for young children. Historically, after the Civil War, the LF used non-formal educational programs to help transition its active members from a militia to a political party. From 1991-1994,

"We created a school for our cadres to integrate them, to give them the rules of democracy: how you negotiate, how you prepare a political speech, what are the rules of democracy, what are the tools to be able to communicate with people correctly."

Today, in 2015, the LF runs two educational programs: one as an open forum and the other as an institute.

The open forum is facilitated as a program entitled, the People's University, and comprises two stages. During the first stage, organizers develop a curriculum by conducting a survey across the six governorates in Lebanon asking university students about their interests. Then, three or four main topics are selected and examined in open forums organized across the governorates. During this second stage, specialists are invited to give a 45-minute lecture and participate in open discussions with an audience of 400 to 500 university students. The LF official representative emphasized that these events are open to all university students from any nationality or political party. The representative added that the open forum: (1) helps "build…a direct communication between this mass and the leadership of the party", (2) "reduces the gap between the vision that you have for these people and their understanding of it or their problems" and (3) models democratic spaces through open dialogues that challenge "your policy and ask questions about your policy", which helps improve relationships between people and the party.

The second initiative provides two non-formal educational programs for university students and graduates, respectively: the Students Intellectual and Political Training Institute and the Cadre Political Academy (CPA). The Institute is a basic program of study that runs for seven to eight months. The LF official representative described the program as "40% theoretical" covering courses like history, geopolitics, history of

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129 LF Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

130 FPM Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

religions in Lebanon, and history of parties; and "60% practical" that includes approaches to negotiation, how to lead, communication skills, and public speaking. The CPA is geared towards university graduates with three to fours years of experience in any field of work. Highlighting that the "CPA is not based on the LF point of view", those who lecture are not only LF partisans.[131] Students in the CPA program can develop their knowledge and research skills by helping them (1) learn about the party, which runs for eight to nine months, (2) research topics that they choose, such as the environment and other political parties, and (3) develop an area of specialization at the Strategy Research Center. Plans to further build non-formal educational opportunities currently focus on trying to develop a Conflict Resolution Center to specialize cadres in conflict resolution processes:

"So we can communicate because if we don't do so and we don't talk about the war and we don't make a résumé or some thesis of the war and we learn from it, we won't be able to avoid [another] war."[132]

The LF official representative recalled the intention, at one point, to hold talks with the PSP about the war in Chouf through the Conflict Resolution Center "to meet middle leaders who did fight against each other."

Interestingly enough, the PSP was the other party to discuss non-formal educational initiatives for its young partisans. The PSP official representative briefly explained the activities at the Progressive Empowerment Institute. The Institute targets primarily young adults between 25-30 years old, although a few participants are still in secondary school (16-18 years old). Nearly half of the cadres come from the party's youth organization, the Progressive Youth Organization. The program at the Progressive Empowerment Institute comprises two parts. The first part includes a series of training courses on leadership and communication skills. The second part focuses on courses in politics, economics, social values, history, Palestine, political education, economic education, and social education.

The SSNP and Hezbollah, to a great extent, have similar approaches to non-formal education programs. These two parties already stand out from the other political parties in Lebanon by having active militias; both currently fighting in Syria as allies to the Syrian government. For children under 16, they organize summer camps. Hezbollah, a party far more resourced than the SSNP, established the Imam Al-Mahdi Scouts in 1985 for Shiite children from 8 to 16 years of age. These children go on camping trips, carry out community service projects, and learn about the Hezbollah

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131 LF Official Representative (2015), [Interview on political parties, memory and learning about the past].

132 Ibid.

ideology and resistance.[133] The summer camps organized by the SSNP take place each summer and run for one week to ten days. They target children from 6 to 15 years of age who are placed into one of three camp groups: Flowers (6-9 years), Leaders (9-12 years), and Eagles (12-15 years). The Education Coordinator of the SSNP, a secular party, explained that according to the SSNP, children of 16 years are capable of being politically active and, so, the summer camps are critical in informing children about the party and its ideologies. He also explained that the summer camps take place across all of Lebanon (about 25-30 camps) with a common curriculum of set activities designed by an education department at the party. The curriculum aims to help children build character by experiencing an organized way of living far more structured than home and meeting people from other places and sects. Each year, the SSNP chooses a specific theme and designs learning activities that present the party's narrative for children to learn. Previous themes included, The Right of Return (Palestine), From Sana' to Wafa' (two female martyrs; 1984 and 2004, respectively), Martyrs of Damascus, Martyrs of Gaza, Martyrs of Halba, Threats of Sectarianism, and the Unified Resistance. The children prepare presentations that they showcase to their parents on the last day of the summer camp. Young people ages 16 and above to become camp leaders after receiving two weeks of training sessions on how to manage and facilitate the learning activities. The SSNP also organizes summer camps for young people from 17 to 25 years of age. Activities in these camps have included lectures, films and documentaries, debates, and presentations by non-partisans like religious figures, successful entrepreneurs, or university professors. During the wintertime, SSNP offices around Lebanon organize biweekly meetings for its youth to continue examining selected themes.

When discussing with political party representatives how and why they remember the past through educational approaches, we identify a conceptual tension between building a collective memory and keeping different interpretations of the past for discussion. We also highlight shared values that could be taken into consideration when creating a platform for inter/intra party dialogues on the Civil War. Some of the approaches to learning about a violent past showed the typical competing views of maintaining a dominant grand narrative versus focusing on exploring different interpretations. Moreover, the vision of preserving conflicting interpretations while building a collective memory opens a debate on the extent to which this is conceptually feasible. Despite the differences in approaches and agendas to learning about historical events, especially the 1975-1990 Civil War, the party representatives

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[133] Christopher Elder, *The Hezbollah Model.* Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 2011).

have, to a great extent, demonstrated an ambition to formally and non-formally reexamine a history of war and armed conflict for the purpose of reconciliation and commitment to resolving differences through non-violence. They clearly appreciate institutionalized initiatives like summer camps, research, and conflict resolution centers. Furthermore, some of their extra-curricular activities require gathering evidence and disseminating claims for others to review and respond to. Albeit these activities presuppose knowledge production based on dialogue and critical inquiry, each program's curricular framework within its respective party's mission, whether explicitly (e.g., SSNP) or implicitly (e.g., LF and PSP). Furthermore, we acknowledge that organizing activities of remembrance is a freedom of political participation that parties have clearly fixed into their political culture. However, practices of remembrance that explicitly reject others' interpretations of the past, indeed, contradict intentions to learn about the past in a civil and scholarly manner.

5 CONCLUSION

In the theoretical framework outlined in the second part of this study, we presented in detail the different conceptions of memory. It has been highlighted that political parties use political memory as a specific form of collective memory for the formation of durable and unified collective identities.[134] Indeed, the formation of such identities emerged as the main purpose of the use of memory for political parties in Lebanon. Furthermore, representatives from almost all parties in our sample group emphasized that their activities to remember the past are very much geared towards the present and the future. In this sense, political memory is an important requirement for the legitimization of the current position of a political party.[135] Political memory has many parallels to the concept of cultural memory.[136] It is also artificially created and intentionally imparted on the partisans by the use of symbolic forms and practices ('media of remembrance' like political iconographies and rituals) within specific cultures of remembrance.

We have illustrated, by means of examples, the wide variety of externalized 'media of remembrance' (or 'lieux de memoire' in Nora's terms[137]) used in the commemorative cultures of the parties. These included, among others, commemorative festivities, political songs, speeches, and posters. Findings also showed the importance of partisans' active participation through political rituals and other means. Although the value of participation in political rituals is a common characteristic of political cultures of remembrance in a global context, it is of particular importance in Lebanon because

[134] Cf. Assmann, Aleida, *Der lange Schatten*, 36.
[135] Cf. König, "Das Politische des Gedächtnisses", 116-121.
[136] Cf. Assmann, Jan, "Memory", 128f.
[137] Cf. Nora, „Between Memory and History", 19f.

of the high competition for partisans and power in its multi-party system. Therefore, showing strength through mass participation in the staging of large political spectacles is another main function of political memory for Lebanese parties, as is the mobilization and recruitment of partisans through political iconographies and rituals.

Moreover, we identified common themes in the different cultures of remembrance of political parties in Lebanon. Of particular importance for practically all parties in our sample, is the veneration of the party leaders (dead or living), as well as a pronounced martyr's cult, the remembrance of war and violence, the adherence to particular resistance narratives, and a distinct remembrance of the political parties' actions of the past as always geared towards the strengthening of the Lebanese state. But despite all similarities in the themes political parties regard as important to remember, it became obvious that they are approached from very different perspectives, depending on the ideological world-view of the party and its particular narratives about the past. Hence, the veneration of the leaders, the glorification of martyrs, the position towards the Lebanese state, its history, and the adherence to a resistance narrative can be shaped quite differently when looking closer at the details.

A major characteristic of Lebanese political cultures of remembrance is the significance of memories of violence and war. Lebanon is a society affected by armed conflict, with violence and war shaping its contemporary history and the current political situation in many respects. Hence, the memory of violence is used by the political actors very often to create a sense of nostalgia for times of cohesiveness, comradeship and strength, thereby fulfilling the function of mobilization and recruitment. As the memory of the past is always geared toward the present and the future, the narratives of past violence are also adjusted and rewritten in terms of the necessities of the present situation and the requirements of each successive generation.[138] The student movement against the Syrian presence in Lebanon in the post-war era, for instance, has labeled itself as the continuation of the 'Lebanese Resistance' and took up some of the slogans used by the Kataeb militia and the LF during the war.[139] Moreover, the memories of violence in the cultures of remembrance are sometimes staged in a form of a reenactment of past (and present) conflict. For example, In Hezbollah's martyr's commemoration in February 2010, young men dressed in camouflage, holding flags, put on a musical performance representing the 'Islamic Resistance' and the heroism of the martyrs.[140] During the memorial for Pierre Amin Gemayel in November 2012, members of the

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[138] Cf. Silverstein/Makdisi, „Introduction“, 11.

[139] For example „Be a Man among Men“, which has been used for recruitment posters of the Kataeb Party and the LF.

[140] Participant observation at the commemoration festivity of Hezbollah for their martyrs in an event hall in Haret Hreik/Beirut on 16 February 2010.

student section of the Kataeb Party dressed in military uniforms with berets, marched in goose-step towards the memorial site, where wreaths were laid down. By this reenactment of the violent past through impressive staged events, the memory of times of strength and solidarity within the group is evoked and shown to the partisans and to the public.

The memory of war and violence is an important aspect of the cultures of remembrance of political parties in Lebanon and also shapes their collective identities to a higher degree. The political parties, in some cases, had diametrical positions during the war, fought against each other, and were mostly also in opposing camps during the 'Independence Intifada' and its violent aftermath. Hence, it becomes even more apparent that the different narratives about the past, especially memories of violence and war, are often irreconcilable. The great idea to find a single national narrative all parties agree on seems to not only be impossible and unrealistic in the Lebanese case, but also poses the risk of further conflict between the different political groups. In addition, political parties attempting to convince their respective communities to change their narratives about the past could be seen as a form of cultural destruction to the party and lead to partisans detaching from their party. Many partisans hold on to the memories of war and violence to a greater extent than the leaders and officials of the political parties for personal reasons; the partisans themselves or their family members have fought in the war, made sacrifices for their respective parties, lost comrades in the conflict, and have experienced highly emotional situations of victory and defeat, which have influenced their personal lives up to the present day. These memories of the war are also transmitted from generation to generation and many young partisans, who did not participate in the war themselves, show a high attachment to these memories.

The irreconcilableness of the different narratives of the past makes it virtually impossible to agree on a single national narrative, at least at this point, when Lebanon's political groups are struggling with pressing political, economical and societal conflicts, the Civil War in Syria, and the very large number of refugees. However, that does not mean that there is no chance for dialogue. On the contrary most Lebanese people (and political parties) have always prided themselves a multifaceted, pluralistic society, consisting of so many different confessional communities and ethnic groups as well as Lebanon's political and cultural diversity. Highlighting the cohesion of diverse communities as a cultural strength, alternatives to addressing the past as one story become obvious. When Lebanon's main advantage is its diversity, then the mutual acceptance of different narratives of the past by all political groups can be an approach that would strengthen the pluralistic aspect of the Lebanese society while at the same time would emphasize values like tolerance and freedom of expression. Nevertheless, following this approach, it should be a necessity

for each political party to rethink in which way their respective interpretations of the past are conveyed to the public and whether it may be possible to achieve the same goals by imparting the narratives in a more sensitive way, which does not include insults or provocations of political opponents.

We can learn from the educational field that the disciplinary approach to learning about the past requires multiple perspectives, demands the use of evidence to support claims and can recognize different interpretations of the past as equally valid. This could serve as a model on how different communities can live together, valuing basic freedoms and democratic principles. Indeed, the party representatives during the interviews consistently revealed shared visions of learning about the Civil War through systematic and dialogic methods, whether by focusing strictly on selected events (e.g. FPM, SSNP and PSP) or recognizing and acknowledging different interpretations (e.g. LF and Kataeb). Without having to be mutually exclusive, employing a disciplinary approach to learning history can construct common grounds through the methods of how sources like records and relics are used. If this educational approach to learning about the past becomes a widely accepted way of dealing with the past, a new type of collective memory could emerge; perhaps as a procedural form characterized by the construction and critical review of historical claims, and acknowledging evidence of historical accounts and events. Moreover, political parties with significant influence within the educational domain could play a crucial part in such a transformation.

In education, a disciplinary approach to learning history empowers young people to think and act like historians by valuing and critically examining evidence to make sense about the past.[141] Moreover, methods of thinking historically require responsibility, collaboration, active listening and other democratic behaviors necessary for active citizenship.[142] These principles of democratic education and active citizenship emerged in various degrees across the political parties and their cultures of remembrance. Therefore, we advocate to extend indications of a disciplinary approach to learning about the past into a framework that helps facilitate dialogues between representatives and partisans of political parties, under the terms of mutual exchange of evidence-informed interpretations on the past, and recognizing degrees of validity in different interpretations. For example, political leaders and policy makers can invest in engaging

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[141] Cf. Christine Counsell, "Disciplinary Knowledge for All, the Secondary History Curriculum and History Teachers' Achievement," *The Curriculum Journal* 22 (2011): 201-225; M. Suzanne Donovan and John Bransford (eds.) *How Students Learn: History in the Classroom* (Washington, D.C.: National Academic Press, 2005); Stéphane Lévesque, *Thinking Historically: Educating Students for the Twenty-first Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

[142] G. Tribó Traveria, "History Teaching and Peace Education in a Time of Crisis: How Can We Build a Shared Future Based on Dialogue and Peace?," *Policy Paper* 9 (2013): 1-6.

young people and adults to ask critical questions about an uncertain past, critically examine various sources and listen and respond responsibly to each others' evidence-informed claims. This utopian view to engage political parties in collaborative and critical practices of [re]constructing history clearly poses as a high level of threat to the dignity and identity of a political party's culture. One possible approach to address this nearly inevitable risk is to begin or continue a culture of scholarship that critically engages with evidence and presents claims about the past for others to examine. Non-formal educational programs like the Cadre Political Academy and the Progressive Empowerment Institute are starting places.

Such activities would gradually transform a continuous, and to a great extent, fruitless conflict over producing one single-narrative [hi]story as the truth into a culture of responsibility towards embracing other cultures of remembrance, even if they are contradictory. By accepting other interpretations of the past as equally valid, the integrity of each party's historical narratives would be maintained and partisans clinging to these memories would not be alienated. In the field of education, the approach should be to learn about different perspectives on history and to create a culture of responsibly investigating puzzles of the past. As political parties in Lebanon are very influential actors in the field of education and have a strong impact on the development of a new history curriculum for history textbooks in schools, they should be made aware of the advantages of the disciplinary approach to learning history. Consequently, party representatives can use their power to influence the government to promote a new praxis for learning about the past in schools and at home by implementing this approach in educational policies in Lebanon and by setting a good example through their own intra/inter party dialogues concerning the interpretation of the past.

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